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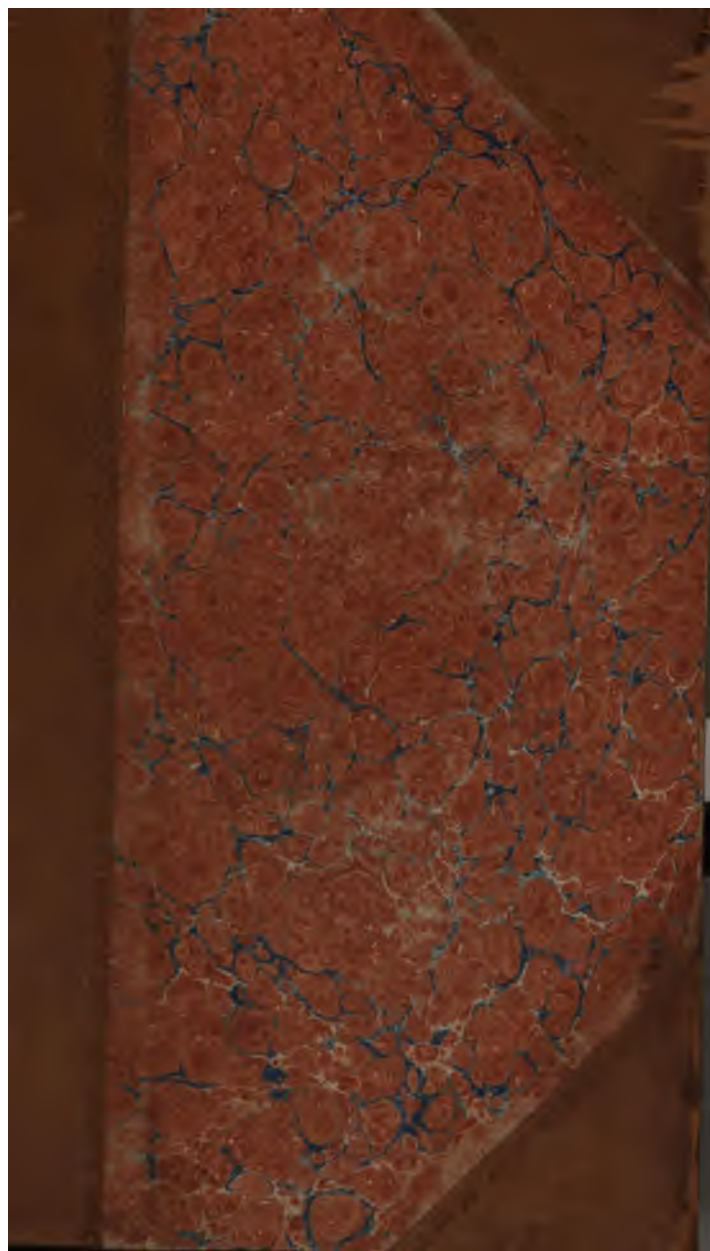
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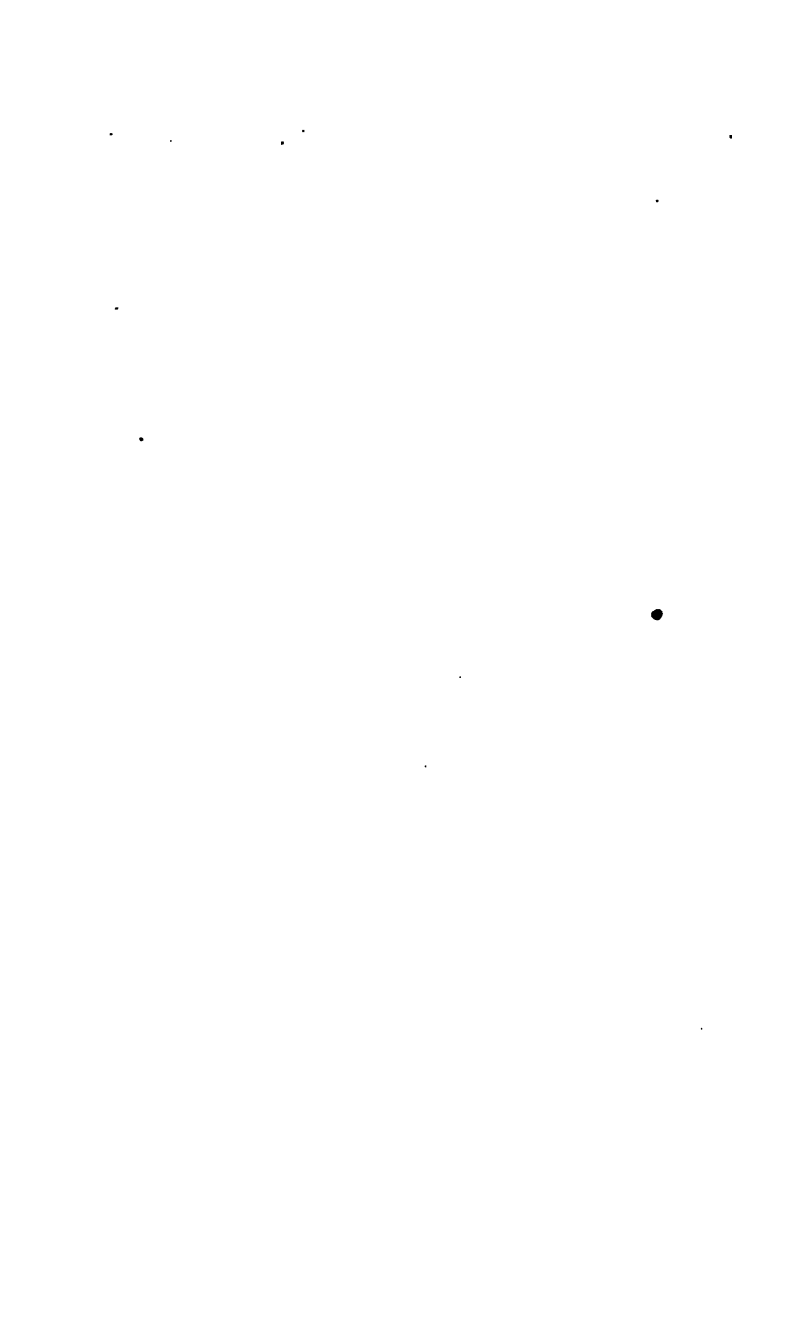
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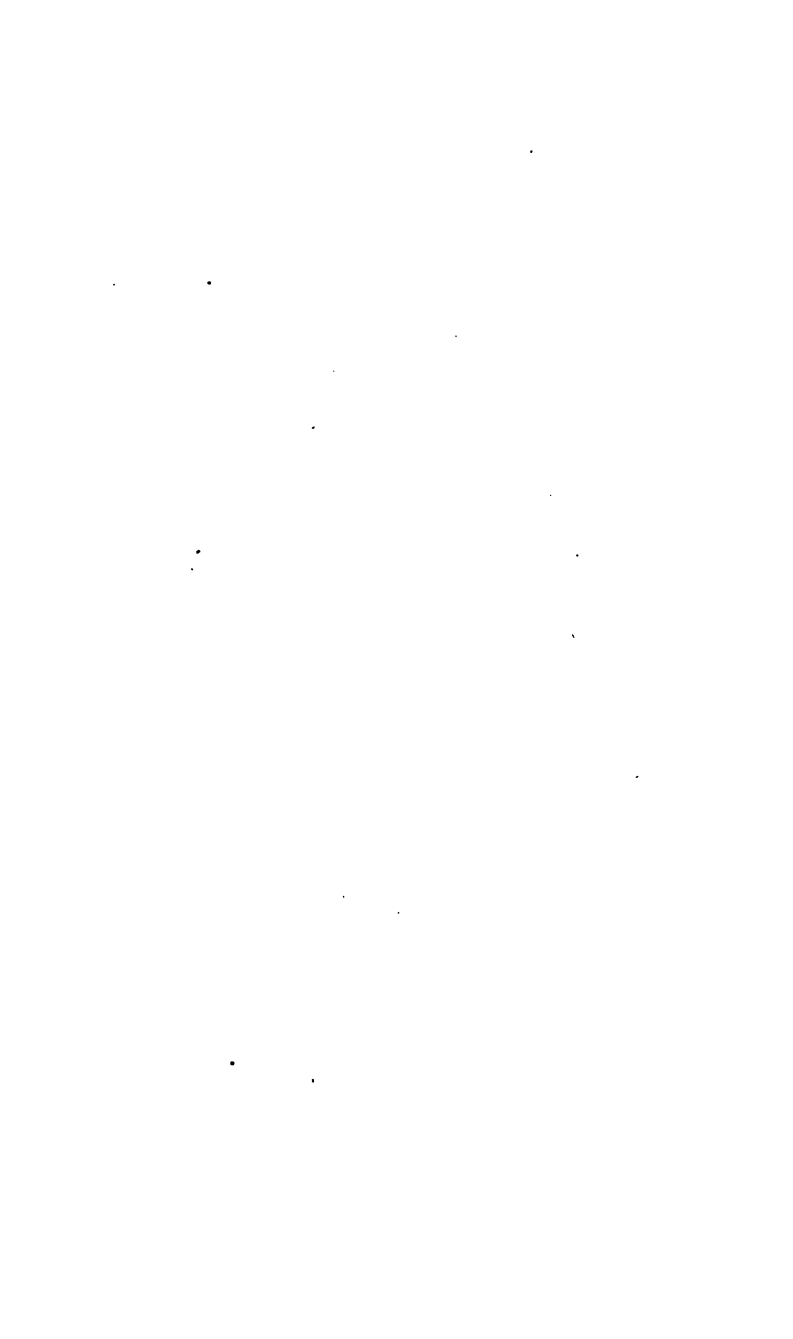




33.

273.





HORÆ OTIOSÆ;

OR,

THOUGHTS, MAXIMS, AND OPINIONS.

"Le jugement est un outil à tous sujets,
et se mêle par tout."

Montaigne.



LONDON:

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P R E F A C E.

IN the following work, the reader will discover little besides the bare thought, expressed for the most part in the fewest words. It has been the aim of the writer, without excluding attempts at analysis, to convey rather truth in the mass, than the appendages or details of truth; to exhibit the results of meditation, more than the process by which those results may have been attained. He conceives that this is the method exemplified by many of the best authors, especially by Lord Bacon in his *Essays*; a performance which, though not deficient in illustration or fancy, abounds, perhaps more than any other production in our language, in general and

comprehensive views. The ablest compositions are unquestionably those which condense the greatest body of thought into the least possible compass ; and the books which consist chiefly of aphorisms, or concise and philosophical reflections, include some of the most valuable portions of literature. Without any pretensions to so distinguished a rank, the subsequent pages will accomplish their design, should they be found to contribute but a few fragments towards the erection of the fabric of Truth.

Of the ideas introduced, some will perhaps be thought not sufficiently developed, and others may be regarded as incorrect or problematical. In a work which touches on so great a variety of subjects, it is only reasonable to suppose that several opinions may be advanced, to which the judgment of all will not readily accede. It is hoped, however, that attentive consideration will serve to diminish the number of those passages of which the sentiment may be deemed erroneous, as well as to remove the obscurity, or supply

any deficiencies, occasioned by the brevity of other passages. At all events, the merits of the volume are to be determined by its general character, not by any detached portions.

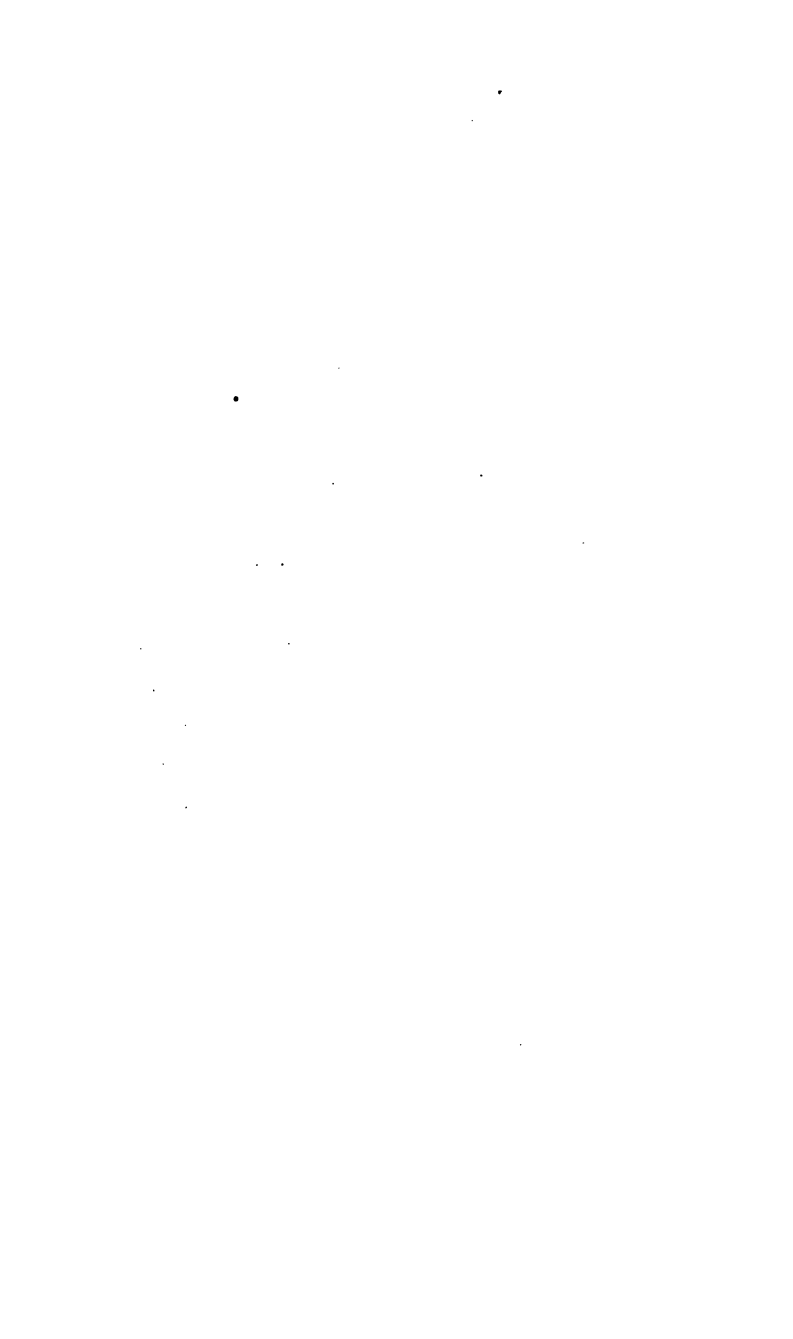
It may be proper to intimate, that the reflections which it contains were originally committed to writing as they occurred to the mind. The author has since distributed them under a few leading topics, as some kind of arrangement seemed preferable to a totally miscellaneous and immethodical order of succession. Against the particular classification which has been made, it would not be difficult to urge objections; and several of the remarks might have appeared, with perhaps equal propriety, in some of the sections to which they are not allotted. But he feels little hesitation in acknowledging, that he views the method of the work as a point of very inferior moment. Almost all subjects, as well as truths, have a mutual affinity, and more or less blend with each other; and should the observations themselves be judged worthy of attention, he will

consider himself fortunate, though he may not have employed the most logical or systematic arrangement.

Perhaps he requires some indulgence for introducing, in connexion with the present attempt, the name of the late Sir James Mackintosh, who, a short time before his death, perused the work in manuscript, and was pleased to express himself gratified with the contents. The author would not have ventured thus to notice the imprimatur of that illustrious man, were it not as affording an opportunity of apology for the imperfections which the volume may exhibit, in consequence of appearing without the advantage that might have been derived from the suggestions of his philosophic and candid mind.

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HORÆ OTIOSÆ.

PART I.

ON CHARACTER.

CHARACTER is composed of detached qualities, which are generally elicited by circumstances. If a person therefore marked down each particular trait, at the time of its disclosure, he would at length be furnished with the elements of a correct portrait; but to complete the picture, it would be necessary to combine the separate features in a certain order or relative disposition. Supposing a statue were broken into fragments, what sort of representation would the pieces convey in their disjointed form? or even if again united, unless the several parts were adjusted to each other according to their respective proportions?

The generality of men have no ruling passion, but spend their days in a kind of passive acquiescence, and are borne on unconsciously by the tide of life. A ruling passion requires mental energy, of which most people are destitute.

Perhaps it is questionable whether the nature and character of man have been developed in a degree at all proportionate to the elements and resources of the mind. What imagination could have dreamed, in the earlier ages of the world, that he was capable of those varieties of action which he has since exhibited? or that so peculiar a combination of mental and moral qualities was possible as some persons have possessed? Mankind are moulded by circumstances; and if we can conceive that, with the same faculties and susceptibilities, they could be placed under a new system of external influences, may we not conclude that their characters would be so differently shaped, that they might almost pass for another order of beings?

There is commonly more originality of character in remote and thinly-peopled districts, than in cities or populous towns. Men are so much influenced by mutual association, that a general similarity of qualities is apt to be acquired by intermixture with a large circle of acquaintance.

In some persons we may observe a profusion of feeling, which, if left to its own operation, will expend itself on a multiplicity of trivial or vexatious objects. The remedy is to have some elevated pursuit or passion which shall absorb *the feelings*. Excess of sensibility will not then

waste itself on trifles, and concentration of feeling on a specific object will tend to facilitate its attainment.

Character is often as strongly marked in childhood as at any subsequent period; and to a discerning eye, the qualities which discriminate children from each other, are as perceptible as the qualities that discriminate persons of mature age.

To gain a correct acquaintance with human nature, it is not necessary to move in a public or extensive sphere. A more limited circle of observation conduces to greater minuteness and accuracy. A public mode of life is favourable to a knowledge of manners; a private, to a knowledge of character.

They who pride themselves on the discernment of faults and imperfections in character, frequently overshoot the mark in their calculations of conduct. They appear to consider man only as a selfish being, and forget that he is also the subject of imagination, caprice, affection, and various complex principles and feelings, which have all a material influence on his actions.

Persons of impetuous and apparently unbending character, often possess a latent fund of affection and exquisite sensibility.

The influence of physical causes, in the formation of intellectual and moral character, has never been sufficiently regarded in any system of education.

The principal difference between a wise and a foolish man seems to consist not so much in the general superiority of the thoughts of the former as in the selection of those which he discloses. Perhaps as many trivial and impertinent ideas pass through the mind of a wise as of a foolish man, but the one conceals while the other divulges them.

There is little uniformity in the characters of men, so that few general assertions can be hazarded respecting them; as, that a wise man will never act in this or that manner. Wise men are not always wise.

Solitude is adapted to give a knowledge of character; mixing with the world, to draw out or to modify character.

The ruling passion of any one relates to those objects, as to which he can least bear to learn the success of others, if he himself is unsuccessful.

One criterion of character is the prevalent train of thought in seasons of relaxation from customary pursuits.

The feelings of some, though once open to a variety of impulses, are now buried so deep in the heart, that few of the vicissitudes of life can move them; as, in the profound parts of the ocean, the fluctuations on its surface, the sunshine, cloud-shadows, breeze, and tempest, are equally unknown.

The features of character are like those of a landscape, which imperceptibly vary with the progress of day, and as lights or shadows are reflected on the scene. Perhaps there is no moment in which a person's qualities are exactly the same as at any other period.

How many interesting traits of mind and disposition, exhibited by childhood, are entirely lost, for want of enlightened discrimination on the part of observers! In general, parents are sufficiently quick-sighted in noticing particulars respecting their children, but commonly overlook the most characteristic circumstances, or class them with those of an ordinary description.

It is not unfrequent for certain peculiarities of mind or character to be transmitted by descent; yet this must arise from the transmission of certain physical properties. Souls are not propagated; but by the materials and composition of the body, the qualities and operations of the

intellect are undoubtedly affected. This consideration may in some measure account for the differences which seem to prevail in the mental and moral attributes of the sexes.

A considerable portion of self-confidence has a tendency to draw out a person's qualities, whatever may be their nature.

The kind of character often found the most agreeable in life, is that of the social, sprightly, good-natured man; but this, of all descriptions, commonly leaves the faintest remembrance after death. To secure a lasting place in the memory, some of the sterner or more elevated qualities seem necessary. The man of mirth and pleasantry is soon forgotten; the philosopher, or even the cynic, lives, in spite of us, in our minds.

For the most part, the French may be considered as superior to the English in discrimination of character, whether as to the whole or its nicer shades. In general also women appear to be more acute observers of character than men.

PART II.

ON MIND, STUDIES, AND INTELLECTUAL HABITS.

It is not with the mind as with cabinets of art, which are of limited dimensions, and can admit only a certain number of objects. In proportion to the multiplicity of ideas is the capacity for still farther augmentation. The more truths the mind acquires, the easier is their retention; for as memory depends on association, an increase of ideas supplies so many additional links of connexion; so that mental acquisitions are susceptible of indefinite enlargement. It will generally be found that paucity of ideas is combined with feebleness of memory, and that they who possess the least knowledge, have the worst retention.

A person whose mind is replenished with facts, or the principles of science, has a palpable kind of intellectual wealth, perhaps also the most available. But a man may be rich in the stores of imagination and feeling, while he appears to the generality almost destitute of mental treasure.

The leading distinction between men of enlarged and philosophic minds, and the uninformed multitude, appears to be, that the former perceive, at least in part, the reasons or causes of things, while the latter perceive only the things themselves. But as to practical advantages, there is considerable equality between the two classes.

The very appropriation of what is valuable, and the rejection of what is worthless or indifferent, in things relating to the mind, argue no slight intellectual superiority.

A considerable obstacle to the mental progress of man, is the necessary distribution of his powers into so many channels; a want of concentration on subjects purely intellectual. This division of attention is owing partly to the very constitution of his nature, to his physical necessities, abstracting his thoughts from mental pursuits; partly to different passions, inclining to different objects according to the temporary sway of each.

Variety of studies, so far from weakening the mind, is a powerful means of promoting its energy and growth. We seldom meet with persons of vigorous understanding, whose range of thought has been confined chiefly to one *department*.

In the case of some, there appear to be periodical seasons of mental activity; and the greatest portion of it frequently exists in the absence of external gratification and variety.

The study of languages has given a character to modern minds, by the habits of discrimination and analysis which it requires; and has partly contributed to the present advancement of science and reasoning.

The comparative insignificance of mental superiority is evinced by the circumstance, that the moment after death, a person of the smallest intellect or attainments, will probably possess a more capacious mind than that of the greatest genius on earth.

Truth, of whatever kind, is only fact or reality. But in a multitude of instances, men are much fonder of fiction than of reality; for all false sentiments are only so many fictions or fancies, in place of facts. One reason is, because there is often considerable difficulty in arriving at facts, but little or none in taking up with some vague or apparent resemblances.

In studies, if a person aim only at mental expansion, almost any subject will be equally

beneficial, when examined with patience and impartiality.

The thorough investigation of any topic will qualify the mind for succeeding in the study of a different department. The reasons are, because there is great similarity in all matters of research, as to appearances, causes, influence, and the like; and also because the understanding acquires strength and enlargement from the exercise itself.

Many persons have patience in affliction, who have little or none in the pursuit of truth. Yet in the latter case it is more beneficial, being productive of positive advantage; while in the former case, the advantage is chiefly negative.

A fertile mind clothes every object with a thousand borrowed ideas and associations, while an ordinary mind sees in every thing only its naked self.

Let the attainment of knowledge give place to its application and use. Speculation is subordinate to action.

There is in some minds a singular combination of romance and judgment.

With what vividness and profusion do thoughts and feelings sometimes revive, after they have long

been slumbering in the soul! We may conceive the case of all past ideas being restored to the memory. Perhaps something of the kind will take place at the last day, when, to the wonders attending the resurrection of the body, will be added the resurrection of myriads of thoughts, which, though now sleeping and forgotten, may, like the spell-bound figures of romance, start forth on a sudden into life and energy.

Men hope, by systems and rules, to shape different minds according to one fixed model; but nature and external circumstances intervene, to cross the design; and thus keep up the infinite diversity of intellect and attainments, corresponding to the equally varied tempers and conditions of mankind.

Let the study of intellectual philosophy be combined with that of political economy, as the former is concerned chiefly with speculative abstractions, and the latter with practical details.

Persons of rapid conceptions may be regarded as possessing the advantage of a longer life than those whose apprehensions are slow.

Truth itself has not sufficient charms to captivate the vulgar, but must be veiled in mystery, or invested with some adventitious ornaments or

attractions, to strike the popular taste. An unsophisticated mind loves truth for its very simplicity.

As people in later times may be considered the ancients of the world, the effect is much similar to the imaginary case of living throughout the series of all past ages. Yet how little would that circumstance, supposing it possible, assist in the regulation of present conduct! How unnecessary would be the greater portion of the facts accumulated! A similar redundancy of ideas may be possessed in reference to prior events, which are rarely of much service in the management of actual circumstances. A slight intermixture with men and things, will afford more practical wisdom than the collective facts of all history.

The chief value of mathematical studies consists, perhaps, in their tendency to discipline the mind. But that end can be accomplished, with equal advantage, by the perusal of any abstract argumentative work. In this case, also, the mind will be acquiring fresh ideas, so as to receive more benefit than the study of mathematics can afford; although the science may deserve attention, on account of the intellectual expansion likely to result from an acquaintance with a new branch of inquiry.

Independence of judgment is one of the rarest things in the world; and the prevailing defect in education, is the neglect of the judgment or reasoning faculties. The consequence is, that among those who are regarded as well-educated, few are capable of comprehending or discussing an extensive or complicated question.

Madness is much more common than is generally supposed, and seems by no means incompatible with the vigorous exercise of the intellectual faculties.

The sensations of the mind are often of so subtle and complicated a nature, that to analyze them, no ordinary discrimination and practice are required. There are thousands of feelings, of which the elements, if not the causes, lie almost totally concealed from the subjects of them.

It is not uncommon to possess a thirst for particular departments of knowledge; but the mind is scarcely in a proper tone, unless facts and information, of every kind, be objects of interest.

Brutes exhibit almost every indication of mind that can be found in man; as, memory, judgment, imagination, gratitude, friendship, revenge, &c. together with a capacity for progressive advancement, and an adaptation to circumstances of those

The study of man is one of the most important, yet least agreeable objects of attention.

Is it better to wait for ideas to arise spontaneously, or to strike out thought by application to some particular subject? With imaginative minds, the former course may be preferable; the latter, with those which are argumentative. The prevalent authorship is certainly not owing to voluntary gifts of intellect.

Throughout the system of animated nature, little proportion is observable between compass of mind, and that of the frame which it inhabits. There are more indications of thought and contrivance in a bee, for instance, than in a lion or an elephant. Among human beings, the diminutive in body are often the largest in soul. With the brute creation, in particular, the degree of understanding seems regulated by the purposes, not the dimensions, of the bodies which they possess.

How many subjects that deserve investigation, will every person, when he comes to die, be necessitated to leave unexplored!

If an active mind were restricted to the barren details of an ordinary dictionary, it would discover

abundant materials for reflection, and even for the exercise of imagination.

The discovery of new ideas is not essential to the character of mental originality. A certain juxtaposition and combination of well-known truths, will often supply unquestionable proof of decided originality and genius.

Some minds gather strength from slight and imperceptible causes, as trees occasionally flourish almost on the naked rock.

The sciences of which the study affords the greatest exercise to the mind, are not those whose principles are the most fixed and unquestionable, as for instance, natural philosophy, or mathematics; but such as are connected with a degree of fluctuation, and require the balancing of probabilities, as political or mental philosophy, ethics, &c.

Some of the best things, in almost every department of literature, have been produced with the fewest external helps.

To attain a correct, especially a comparative estimate of different things, it is often necessary to contemplate them at a considerable distance, and after the mind has lost the impressions which

it may have received from any one in particular ; as, in forming an opinion of the general qualities of a landscape, we do not confine attention to separate objects, but survey the whole in their combined appearance, and under a certain remoteness of aspect.

Minute accuracy is requisite on few subjects, and is almost incompatible with general and extensive knowledge.

Amidst the multiplicity of books and sciences that solicit our notice, the most compendious and effectual method is, to study any particular topic in works where it is systematically and fully treated. There will afterwards be little occasion to consult other treatises on the subject, as a slight inspection of those parts only which profess to contain any new discoveries, will be amply sufficient.

It is a mistaken idea, that the mass of mankind, who pass their lives in ordinary and active pursuits, are destitute of education. Most of the objects and affairs which are brought under their notice, demand the exercise of some judgment and discrimination ; so that the mind is often more invigorated and sharpened by this species of education, than by that which is obtained *almost exclusively* through the medium of books.

All affect to applaud the repeated perusal of the best productions, yet few adopt the practice. It may be doubted whether the omission is deserving of censure, and whether the mind is not more benefited by entering on new fields of inquiry, than by minute familiarity with any subject or any writer.

How little do the brute or insect parts of the creation know of man, his character, feelings, or pursuits! Probably our capacities are as narrow, and our minds as dark, in reference to the universe at large.

No kind of study or inquiry into fact, is a proper object of contempt.

There is little wisdom in urging persons generally to aim at intellectual eminence. This is not necessary for the interests of literature, as an ample fund of mental wealth has been already contributed by others. Much less is it required in the ordinary purposes of life, for which a very small share of intellectual merit is sufficient. What is principally desirable, is a little practical sense, in conjunction with moral principle.

The advice is unsound, as well as impracticable, which recommends that our time be always occupied with some industrious, or at least specific

pursuit. After laborious mental efforts, the attention should be diverted to the lightest subjects possible ; and as a general rule, it is best to leave the mind a good deal free to its own operations, and to the entrance of casual reflections.

General and immethodical reading is not without its advantages, and seems preferable to that which is limited, however select or systematic.

To excel in the sciences or in languages, requires almost exclusive attention during life ; but to excel in matters of general literature, the more diversified the subjects of inquiry the better.

A feeble memory is accompanied with several advantages : it throws the mind more on its own resources, and thus contributes to its strength and independence. It also renders the re-consideration of subjects more fertile in pleasure, as the charm of novelty has not been destroyed by familiarity and retention.

There are some departments of study that possess little merit in themselves, but deserve notice on account of the brilliant ideas which some masterly hand has shed on the otherwise uninviting theme.

Perhaps there is something in the mode by which insects and other short-lived creatures receive ideas and sensations, that makes life seem to them as long as it appears to ourselves.

If we suppose, which we may without admitting what is generally considered the doctrine of materialism, that the attributes and exercise of the intellect depend chiefly on physical organization, we must of course allow a natural and original difference in minds; such a difference, at least, as cannot be produced or destroyed by education.

Most of the physical sciences are still in their infancy, though the world has now subsisted nearly six thousand years. So endless are the properties and phenomena of nature, that the research of another period equally long would fail to exhaust the subject, and might even leave a still greater variety of mysteries for exploration.

How few and general are the ideas which occur to the mind, on a review of any subject that has some time before engaged its attention! The greater part of most histories and narratives is perfectly useless, and never retained. The object attempted, therefore, should be compression, not amplification; and only those characters or events described, that serve to give an accurate and philosophical view of the subject.

There is slight reason to censure indolence of body, if conjoined with activity of mind.

Sometimes ideas stream into the mind as thick and rapidly as flakes of snow descend in winter, while at other times it is unvisited with a single thought ; in both cases apparently without the intervention of the will.

Mental superiority is generally accompanied with a consciousness of its possession.

It is not uncommon for the mind to grasp a great general truth, without having a minute perception of its elements, or comprehending the various principles which it involves.

One effect of an extensive acquaintance with books, and a concomitant of mental expansion, is a freedom from extravagant or exclusive admiration of any.

If we are to exist only during the brief space allotted to human life, our education is of little consequence ; but if the mind is immortal, it is worth cultivating.

A powerful barrier to intellectual advancement, is a profusion of external objects inviting attention, filling the mind, and frittering away the time

and thoughts. This is one reason why the wealthy, who are occupied with elegant trifles, or the industrious classes, who are seeking to be wealthy, or are busied with the means of obtaining a subsistence, so rarely excel in the departments of mind. He who would secure intellectual pre-eminence, must spend much of his time in solitary reflection.

Profundity of ideas is often an impediment to fluency of words.

It is in the very nature of mind to enlarge its possessions, nor can we imagine any limits to its progress in knowledge.

Where the mind is vigorous and rapid, the chief requisite is not profound information, but such a general and attractive view of subjects as may excite the powers to their own operation.

The process of nature, whether in the growth of bodies or the revolutions of the seasons, is always too slow and unbending for an active and impatient mind, which is therefore more delighted with the world of intellect, where there is greater rapidity of operation, as well as more scope for the exercise of control. To what extent a passive disposition, and a habit of patience, may be fos-

tered by converse with the material world, is a question deserving of attention.

When original ideas become familiar, they cease to be admired. It seems to show the vanity of intellectual efforts and superiority, that the commonest thoughts are practically the most valuable.

In the pursuits of mind, as well as of life, generalisation should precede attention to minute particulars.

Warmth of blood may suit a lively imagination, but coldness of temperament is almost essential to correct judgment.

Nature conquers ignorance, but philosophy conquers nature.

There is as much difference, in point of intellectual strength, among the uneducated, as among the more cultivated classes; and this difference is manifested in the views which they form, and the methods of procedure which they employ, in relation to things that fall within their respective provinces.

The ancients must have possessed a decided advantage over the moderns, in being able to *devote attention* almost entirely to knowledge

itself, without the necessity of spending so large a portion of life in the acquisition of languages.

Minds the most inquisitive and active, seldom enjoy so much of the comfort of knowledge as minds of an inferior stamp; because they are less satisfied with past, than anxious about future conquests.

Method and punctuality are so little natural to man, that where they exist, they are generally the effect of education or discipline.

The way to mental proficiency, is the comparative neglect of what is acquired, and the pursuit of what is original or unknown.

As thought supplies materials for discourse, so discourse gives precision to thought.

Of mental acquisitions, those are often found the most valuable as well as most agreeable, which have not been secured in the regular path of study; yet the very ability to appreciate and apply these stores, has perhaps been communicated by the more direct and less pleasing inquiries.

The folly of those who make a point of reading the whole of the works which they undertake, is

apparent from the circumstance, that it is often a matter of chance or caprice with authors themselves, whether so much or more is prepared for perusal. The best rule is, to examine only those parts which contain what is original, or new to ourselves.

The history of some minds is varied only by the successive idols of their admiration. Such appear incapable of existing without subjection to others, and destined never to act for themselves, or secure any intellectual achievement.

An inferior mind is bewildered amid the details and appendages of a subject, and attaches as much importance to them as to the leading and most essential points. A vigorous mind seizes the essence of a question; and by its rapid operations, compresses the necessary particulars into a very minute compass.

The possessors of knowledge have commonly more errors than the vulgar; but they have also a thousand times more truths. The ignorant have few errors, because they have but few ideas of any sort. Who would disparage the faculty of vision, because, with the myriads of beautiful objects and scenes which it discloses, it occasionally reveals those that are deformed or unsightly?

A man's opinion of practical things is rarely worth much before the age of thirty; though some minds are so precocious, that their views in general are as sound and mature at eighteen or twenty, as at any future period.

Few propositions are so simple or elementary as not to require some deliberation, before an opinion can be formed of their truth or falsehood. Yet the generality decide on the most intricate questions with a promptitude which nothing but absolute intuition could justify.

Except for professional or particular purposes, those kinds of knowledge are the most valuable, of which the interest increases with life.

Philosophy has been spread out before us for ages, yet with little effect from the specimens which Nature herself has exhibited. How much might have been learnt respecting the laws of motion, and the means by which it is facilitated, by observing the structure of birds, especially of the fishes which swim the most rapidly! The principle of the telescope, and even its latest improvements, might have been suggested by careful examination of the human eye; and many of the most interesting and useful parts of mechanics might have been discovered from the construction and anatomy of bodies. The

general course has been, to ascertain the principles of philosophy in an abstract or circuitous way, and afterwards to notice the exemplifications of them which nature affords.

It is pleasant to have the mind tranquilly occupied, catching ideas that float by, as a bough across a stream detains the light matters or flowers that glide along the surface.

The thoughtful and philosophic are frequently as much influenced by appeals to the senses as the vulgar. They have the same senses, though not the same minds.

What is termed light reading, is sometimes censured without reason. If the expression is employed to designate poetry, fictitious compositions, biographical or historical memoirs, essays, anecdotes, books of travels or natural history, it would be desirable to know the departments of literature which are either so agreeable or instructive.

Those who, on a discovery of the unexplored subjects which study discloses, lament the smallness of their acquirements, may comfort themselves with the reflection, that in reality they know much compared with the generality, or with their former selves.

The memory of some is so little retentive, that continued application produces rather a change than an augmentation of ideas.

The highest and the lowest orders of mind are sometimes conducted to the same result, though by a very different path. They are often alike, for instance, in their contempt of certain objects or pursuits, which usually appear attractive to others. But in the one case, contempt is indulged because the mind is far above them; in the other, because it is far beneath them.

Of all things relating to man, his thoughts are the most fugitive, and generally die without record.

Professions of universal education are as ludicrous as professions of universal cure; for the follies of some minds are incurable. Yet it is with mental as with bodily distempers: few are unsusceptible of mitigation.

It is worth while to master some kinds of learning, were it only to arrest the folly of those who assume an air of mystery and importance on account of their attainments in those branches.

Mere exemption from error in general, is within the reach of an ordinary mind. The characteristic

of a powerful one, is to grasp after new or vigorous ideas, though it may hold them in connexion with several minor inaccuracies.

Perhaps the education intended to render the mind most active and skilful in practical affairs, should be conducted in the main without the intervention of books.

A penetrating judgment, unless combined with a stoical heart, is sometimes fatal to the repose of its possessor; for, like the gifted Cassandra, it is destined to see things to which others are blind or incredulous, and often, therefore, occasions unpleasant collision with prevalent sentiments and admiration.

Let the mind receive an early tincture from such works as "Gulliver's Travels," and the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," that its notions of possibility may not be bounded by the ordinary course of things, much less by the limited customs or maxims of any particular country.

Whatever veneration a wise man may feel for the great luminaries of mankind a century or two ago, he will take care to be pretty well versed in the literature of his own times. There are a thousand associations connected with living or recent

authors, which not only excite deeper interest, but assist in entering more fully into the spirit and compass of their writings.

A philosopher would choose to have his history recorded in his memory rather by the successions of thought, by the changes and progress of his mind, than by the outward circumstances or events which he may witness, or to which he may be subject.

Reading is one of the best methods of instruction where error or prejudice is to be overcome, as no personal feelings are implicated in the case. You do not disclose your mistakes or ignorance, or exhibit your inferiority, in consulting a written composition, which enlightens without mortifying.

The most important truths are in every body's possession ; and are acted upon successfully by the rude, without any consideration of their reasons or evidences, and sometimes without a perception of their existence. This is the case in natural science, mental philosophy, and ethics. With regard to science, the least informed act every day on the principle, that in proportion as the weight of a body approaches the centre, the danger of its falling is diminished. This truth every person, whether consciously or not, applies practically in walking. And so with respect to

other leading principles in science.—In like manner as to mental philosophy, every one has a practical knowledge that memory depends on attention; that there is a mutual and mysterious connexion between the mind and the body; that one train of thought often gives rise to another; in other words, that there is such a thing as the association of ideas. What are called the discoveries of intellectual philosophy, amount to little more, in substance, than such simple and universally acknowledged truths.*—In reference also to the doctrines of morality, or the rules by which men should regulate their conduct in society, the most ignorant are acquainted with the principal of them; as, that vice creates uneasiness in the mind; that we should do to others as we wish they would do to ourselves; that we ought not to steal, be proud, ungrateful, selfish, and so forth. Now it is the business of a philosopher to shew *why* we ought to pursue or to avoid any particular course. But in many instances, especially in the physical and mental sciences, the most intelligent can only classify, or give technical and artificial names to things,

* To the above remark, some illustrious exceptions are furnished by the metaphysical writings of the late Dr. Thomas Brown, whose theory of causation, to say nothing of his speculations in general, entitles him to the character of an original and profound, as well as successful investigator of philosophy.

without possessing a particle more knowledge than the most illiterate.

In youth study; in maturity compose; in old age correct.

The different kinds of mental superiority may perhaps be estimated generally in the order which follows: 1. Profound and original thought. 2. Imagination and poetical invention. 3. Humour and satire. 4. Picturesque narration or description. 5. Imitation.

Among studies, that of the visible creation may perhaps be ranked the lowest. Events, or the circumstances which illustrate character and intellect, occupy the next place; morals the third; and theology the highest, to which all other inquiries should be subordinate.

There is a profusion in the works of creation worthy of their Author. Perhaps the larger proportion of those which are confined within the narrow boundaries of our own world, are concealed from our view. To say nothing of the contents of the sea, or of regions unexplored by man, we have reason to believe in the existence of an infinity of objects which we are unable to perceive with our present senses, or means of discernment. Yet it is conceivable that the universe

may contain orders of being, who possess faculties capable of apprehending minutely all those objects; and possibly man, in a future state, may be furnished with additional and more perfect senses, able to discover not only the portions of nature which are now invisible, but an endless variety of totally new objects.

The primary objects of philosophical and scientific pursuits, are the enlargement of the mental powers, and the discovery of new facts capable of practical application.

The facts of history and of science constitute only the materials of knowledge.

The great benefit of reading is not, perhaps, appropriation of the sentiments or facts perused, but the mental process which is carried on during the exercise, by comparison, contrast, fancy, &c. Reading therefore is beneficial, even when the ideas which it has presented are entirely forgotten. The mind may have been strengthened, or rendered more active.

Men of superior minds do not, perhaps, derive so much benefit from mixing with those of their own stamp, as with persons of different, or even inferior intellectual qualities.

The ancient practice of allowing land to remain fallow for a season, is now exploded, and a succession of different crops is found preferable. The case is similar with regard to the mind, which is more relieved by change of study than by total inactivity.

What a beautiful and moving picture is often presented by the scenery of the clouds! yet to the generality all these splendid appearances are utterly lost, because the mind is so debased and sophisticated.

Let the practice of reading much at once be avoided, as few things are more irksome or less beneficial. Reading should diversify and assist, rather than constitute, the principal occupation of the mind.

Between the most intellectual and accomplished man, and the lowest specimen of humanity, there are more points of equality than of difference.

Our education only commences in the present world.

Many of the finest and most interesting emotions perish for ever, because they are too complex and fugitive for expression.

The practice of reading is calculated to form a habit of abstraction, and so far to elevate the mind, by giving it exercise and pleasure without the intervention of sensible objects.

What a treasure of knowledge has been accumulated by some persons, who die without having rendered it available to themselves or to others!

The whole analogy of nature and of Providence seems to sanction the hypothesis, that minds are originally different.

An excursive mind will frequently have ideas suggested to it, which are totally unconnected with the immediate objects of its attention.

Minute research is unfavourable to a power of generalization, merely because less attention is devoted to combined and comprehensive views, and because, in that case, the one habit is strengthened at the expense of the other. Nothing, however, in the structure of mind, forbids the union of both; and a certain distribution of intellectual effort, will ensure the faculty of analysis, together with that of combination.

According to the habit which prevails in the association of ideas, may be determined the order

and merit of different minds, whether as imaginative, original, argumentative, affectionate, humorous, &c. One of the leading objects of education, and indeed that to which most others may be reduced, is to regulate the connexion of ideas.

Condensation results from the mastery of a subject.

We forget incalculably more of our own thoughts than those of others.

There are multitudes of truths which are worthless in themselves, and merit attention merely as stepping-stones, or as a ladder conducting to something ulterior. When that is attained, the ladder may be dispensed with. The time will perhaps arrive when mere opinions, and the facts which may be compared to the scaffolding of an edifice, being laid aside, the essence of truth, in every department, will be so condensed and simplified, as to come within the reach of the most limited capacity.

Many seem to consider a taste for luxury as involved in a taste for knowledge; and bring against the latter, objections which belong, if they apply at all, only to the former. Mere refinement, apart from correspondent means, may not be very

desirable; but is totally distinct from enlargement of views, which can never, under any circumstances, be of itself injurious.

If reading is not of much service in directly assisting reflection, it is at least necessary to supply a sufficient diversity of topics for reflection.

We may consider the whole series of mental phenomena as a succession of ideas, more or less intimately associated. This seems to be the case even in dreaming.

The necessity of contemplating objects in an abstract and systematic manner, is a proof of the narrowness of our mental faculties, which are unable to understand what is complex without separation and analysis. Yet nothing in nature is presented to us in an abstract form; and, provided we have a generally correct view of elementary qualities, the more we can combine subjects and ideas, the more rapid will be our intellectual progress.

The way to invigorate and excite the mind, is not so much to urge it with a multitude of motives, as to bring some great subject before its attention.

To preserve the mind healthful, frequent variations in its trains of thought are necessary.

Disregard for the mere authority of great names, has occasioned most of our best things; yet is generally viewed with the utmost suspicion and ill-will.

A great mind is equally shown by the easy relinquishment of petty objects, when attended with difficulty, as by the most determined pursuit of objects that are truly noble.

The influence of unknown and distant mind, is often greater than that of mind in the nearest local connexion; and the emanations of intellect from books, frequently exert a more intimate and powerful sway over thoughts and feelings, than surrounding persons, scenes, or circumstances.

It is the fancy of some, that persons whose views or modes of action differ materially from their own, are touched with insanity: and others extend the charitable suspicion to all who cherish any noble and lofty sentiment or design. It would, however, be an indication of insanity, or at least an inexplicable circumstance, if minds differently constituted and situated were to exhibit an identity of judgment or taste.

Those of a romantic or melancholy cast, feel, at seasons, the deepest pleasure in contracting their sails and their desires, and revelling in the luxury of their own mental resources.

I consider there is a certain quantity of mad blood in the world, which is sure to develope itself in some way, but which is often checked and diverted, or prevented from producing its ultimate effects, by the variety of absurd opinions which, in one department or another, are always to be met with or invented.

The history of the generality comprises little besides the history of their circumstances. The history of genius is the history of the thoughts. Genius is incalculably more influenced by mind than by events.

Except in the arts and sciences, or for special purposes, adherence to habits of systematic study and meditation, shackles the powers, and impedes excursive or original reflections. This sentiment, however, will always be deemed heretical by minds of a secondary order, who seem to imagine that labour is intrinsically meritorious, and that nothing is valuable but what is the result of drudgery.

The effect of wit is perhaps more dependent on the structure of the mind to which it is addressed, than any other species of mental emanation.

One general maxim is worth a hundred particular instances, apart from their principle.

In proportion to the vigour of the mind, is the necessity of energetic occupation for its powers.

Persons of the most capacious and active genius, usually become soonest weary of the things to which their attention is applied, whether scenery, pursuits, or trains of meditation. The fact is, that by the energy and compass of their powers, they quickly penetrate and exhaust a subject, so that afterwards it presents few additional features for contemplation or inquiry.

It is pleasing to observe, how frequently those qualities in our nature which generally require to be counteracted, become, in effect, the occasions of our advantage. We are prone, for example, to neglect whatever is imposed as a task; yet this disposition is often a preservative from considerable injury in education, where the subjects or modes of study prescribed are, in numbers of instances, more adapted to contract and deaden the mental faculties, than to foster their expansion or sensibility.

The bolder and more excursive are our inquiries, the better, if equal diligence be employed in the process of verification. Unless the mind is free from a contracted adherence to prevalent opinions, its powers will ever remain in a state of pupilage, and no prospect of intellectual proficiency can be rationally entertained.

It seems at first view extraordinary, that many who reason correctly on some topics, should fail to do so on others. The explanation, however, appears to be the same with that which applies to diversities of sentiment among different persons. In all cases of error, only a part of the subject is perceived. Let the particulars which go to make up truth on any question, be brought equally before ten thousand separate minds, and they will all adopt the same accurate conclusions. In one sense, all minds are equal, just as all eyes are equal. Men differ, not in the natural faculty of judging, but in the extent to which the facts or ideas that constitute the materials of judgment, obtain admission to the understanding. Erroneous views; therefore, are owing simply to the circumstance, that the elements of correct opinion are incompletely before the mind, whether from its inadequate dimensions, its subjection to prejudice, or its impatience; in consequence of which the subject is examined in a partial or cursory manner. Whenever the whole of truth is present to the

mind, conviction must be the necessary result.

If the literary were more abandoned to their own reflections and criticisms, their minds would be proportionally more sound and masculine.

Genius is ever of an effervescent character, and requires some vent for its own relief. If its activity can be limited to intellectual subjects, and employed chiefly in registering its own thoughts or emotions, its vigour and superiority will probably be displayed to the best advantage.

Perhaps the leading characteristic of a superior mind, is a power of compression ; a faculty which presupposes that of generalization. An inferior understanding never perceives more than certain fragments or mutilated portions of a subject.

Where there is extreme susceptibility of impressions from passing objects or occurrences, a rather secluded mode of life is preferable for genius, in order to allow sufficient scope for its unbiassed operations.

Minds that move principally in the higher realms of thought, can form but a faint idea of the modes of reflection which characterize the

majority of mankind, or of the impressions which they receive from particular scenes or events.

An ardent and impassioned mind, when impelled to some difficult or illustrious enterprise, often flatters itself with the prospect of subsequent remission; but after the object is achieved, the fire still glows in the breast, and stimulates to fresh efforts, till life itself is consumed with the restless energy.

The argument from analogy is of more general application than any other in the concerns of ordinary life; and, with all its susceptibility of perversion, is of essential service in comprehensive and original speculations.

Of some minds, the first decisions are almost invariably the best: subsequent meditation serves only to bewilder their conceptions. This is chiefly the case with imaginative minds; and in general, perhaps, with those of women, who seem to arrive at results more by a species of intuition, than by a process of reasoning. On the other hand, certain persons, and those often of the deepest intellect, appear incapable of forming accurate notions with promptitude. Their thoughts must hover for a while over the generalities of the subject; but the conclusions which they ultimately adopt, are *almost sure* to be of the genuine stamp.

Profound and unintermitted application of mind is frequently more injurious than beneficial, as it tends to repress the excursions, and impair the elasticity of its powers.

Perhaps in most cases the mind grows more between the ages of fifteen and twenty than during the other parts of life.

The inheritance of some appears to be a restless exercise of thought, from which no scenes or pursuits afford the means of escape; a distinguished but a comfortless patrimony.

What mind is so debased or perverted, as not to receive more pleasure from gazing on the clouds, as they pass in silent and solemn majesty along the sky, or assume every variety of shape and colour, than from scanning the movements of men, or criticising the motives and purposes by which they are actuated?

The best ideas are usually those which come unsought and unbidden; which may be said to seize the mind, rather than the mind to seize them; and which allow it no respite or repose till it has delivered itself of the burden. A paroxysm or inspiration seems to agitate the subjects of genius; and to impel them, almost in spite of themselves, to intellectual activity.

Little as we know of the laws or operations of mind, we know less, perhaps, on the whole, of the phenomena of matter.

The cultivation of a logical turn of mind, is apt to establish a habit of too connected and uniform a train in the association of ideas. The affairs of life, and the production of originality, often demand remote and varied, rather than intimate or consecutive combinations of thought.

Many of the greatest minds have been nurtured in solitude.

After the lapse of nearly six thousand years, scarcely any material enlargement of the human mind is perceptible. Knowledge has made some slight progress, but intellect less. Mankind, or rather certain portions of them, sometimes recede, sometimes advance, but only to an inconsiderable extent in either direction. The boundaries of our race, like those of the inferior classes of animated being, seem fixed by pretty determinate laws. There may be occasional or individual advancements, or temporary retrogressions; but the general limits remain impassable, and the general standard continues the same. This view of the subject appears to correspond best with the sentiments which religion conveys respecting the present state, as necessarily imperfect, because

intended to be only introductory to another, in which the mental expansion commenced in this world may be carried on for ever.

While some kind of agitation is necessary to the health and vigour of the mind, the species of commotion occasioned by events, or external causes, appears less favourable than that which is produced by its spontaneous efforts or reflections.

Error is sometimes so nearly allied to truth, that it blends with it as imperceptibly as the colours of the rainbow fade into each other.

Mental character may in a great measure be determined by the kind and extent of the curiosity entertained. Persons of the lowest class of intellect, have scarcely the smallest share of curiosity; and the portion which they possess, is exercised about things the most trivial and barren. A man of pre-eminent mind is distinguished for a curiosity at once comprehensive and insatiable.

They whose general intellectual occupation is of an abstruse or little imaginative nature, often feel more interest than others in the productions of fancy, or the lighter branches of literature; because contrast and novelty are thus brought into more direct and pleasing operation.

A wide disparity exists between the space which a subject occupies in the mind, and that which it commonly fills when reduced to expression.

For the most part, minds which ripen with rapidity are imaginative; while those distinguished for deep or original thinking, are slow in attaining maturity.

The cultivation of the affections and the imagination is a most important part of education, yet is in general entirely neglected. It would indeed require a widely different order of instructors from those that commonly abound.

A mind that aims at the enlargement of its powers, will be careful to exact ideas or truths from every subject of its attention; and esteem no work of particular value, which fails to suggest some new reflections.

All that is often necessary to occasion a flow of ideas and fancies, is to increase or accelerate the tide of blood in the veins.

The best method of acquiring most branches of knowledge, is to study them, if possible, for some specific object or occasion. This will supply the *mind with a powerful stimulus*, and communicate

to the search a practical character, essentially beneficial.

Instructions on manners, and on the economy of life, are infinitely more important than most of the subjects included in our prevalent systems of education. With many persons, the best recommendation of any study appears to be its remoteness from the ordinary affairs of men and of society; so that speculations about the heavenly bodies, investigations of insect nature, or the abstract properties of numbers, assume an aspect of greater consequence than the living world, or any of the circumstances in which mankind are personally interested, or over which they have actual control. It is an unpleasing symptom in literature, when its efforts are lavished on scientific or abstruse disquisitions, to the comparative neglect of life, imagination, and the feelings.

We need a chapter in our literature on the physiognomy of brutes, compared, throughout, with the manifestations of intellect which they otherwise seem to present.

Amidst the existing profusion of admirable works on general topics, it appears undesirable for any but professional men to enter profoundly

into scientific researches. Extensive attainments in these branches are little beneficial to the mind, and for the most part incompatible with proficiency in more important, as well as more interesting inquiries.

PART III.

ON LIFE, MEN, AND MANNERS.

LIFE is composed of few things indefinitely diversified, and is like the ringing of a great many changes on a small number of bells.

To be anxious for the performance of every trivial thing in the best manner, would make life a burden. There are many things which we may be safely allowed to do wrong, or to find out the best method of doing for ourselves. A wise man will avail himself only of the more general maxims or directions.

- When the incidents of life are few, they produce a more powerful impression on the mind; and deficiency in variety of feeling is made up by its intensity.
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Decision and firmness in a cause which is but indifferent, sometimes effect more than timidity and vacillation in a good one.

Some never make perceptible progress in life, because their views and desires outstrip their circumstances. To preserve the wishes stationary, while the circumstances are progressive, a little practical philosophy is needful, in which the vulgar often surpass the learned.

There is slight difference between the great and the little of human life.

Man is borne on by an impulse which he cannot resist. The shades of his character, his taste, his circumstances, are modified by causes over which he has scarcely the least control. Let any person of mature age compare his present qualities, situation, and sentiments, with his youthful feelings and anticipations, and the difference will satisfy him of the truth of this reflection.

People are often pleased with flattery, even when they know it to be nothing better. The reason is, it is a mark of deference, if not to merit, yet to consequence. To many persons, especially the proud and ambitious, attentions are almost equally acceptable, whether proceeding from fear and interest, or from admiration and esteem.

It is sometimes reckoned a mark of modesty in men of distinguished abilities, to acknowledge

deficiencies or mistakes with so much promptitude; while it is considered a symptom of pride in others to be so tenacious for themselves. But the same spirit may reside in both. A great man can make concessions without humility, because the chief points of his superiority are not touched by these concessions. A little man, in contending for trifling distinctions, is contending for his all.

Mirth grafted on general gravity of temperament or profession, appears the more graceful. In such cases there is a sufficient background of solidity in the character, to admit some of the lighter tints and rays of humour; and the contrast thus presented, renders the combination more pleasing.

As, in the formation of avarice, the ulterior object is in time supplanted by that which is secondary or instrumental, so it is frequently in the production of attachment to a business or profession, which is at first pursued for some personal or interested ends, afterwards from preference occasioned by habit.

The mind often practises illusion on itself, when, after the defeat of some favourite enterprise, self-congratulation is indulged on account of the benefits associated with the disappointment; while the advantages of success, supposing it had been attained, are entirely overlooked.

To carry war into the territory of the enemy, has been commonly regarded as the best security of your own. It is a piece of policy, often the refuge of a feeble mind, to apply the maxim in the defence of character.

A person can hardly be considered mature in intellect, who is open to any strong or commanding passion before unknown to him. No circumstance that can possibly occur, will produce much alteration in a wise man. To be impelled by some sudden and overwhelming influence to a particular object, is little less than madness. No man's efforts will effect much in the world; and the greatest and most beneficial results are produced, not by overstrained exertion, but by steady, placid uniformity and perseverance. These remarks apply in nature, in politics, in religion.

To commend a person for those things in which he is generally considered deficient, is almost a certain way to his good opinion, especially if suffering on account of those deficiencies.

Men learn little by the experience of past generations, but go through the same follies, and buy wisdom, if they get it at all, in the same costly

Death diminishes the value of some men's opinions, and enhances that of others.

Trite maxims sometimes appear invested with originality, when their correctness is first ascertained by experience.

It is a symptom of a feeble mind to employ every attainable facility for the accomplishment of its purposes; of an ill-regulated mind, to make use of every accessible enjoyment.

Men are so conscious of their own feebleness, that submission to others is often readily conceded, simply as the means of freeing from the burden of self-command.

It is not improbable that angels regard most of our pursuits and feelings, as we do the sports and passions of children.

In general, it is perhaps better to be too sanguine than too timid, especially in the practical concerns of life : *Possunt quia posse videntur.*

It would be a hopeless attempt to reduce the conduct of men to rules. Who shall determine the course of the wind, or the variations of a feather's flight ?

When you find a person suspicious, you may read his history, and conclude that he has often met with treachery or ill-treatment ; for of all qualities, suspicion is the least natural to man.

Perhaps there are few who, on a retrospect of life, would be willing to live it over again ; yet this may be owing as much to its progressive character, as its partial unhappiness.

There is a great fund of power in the world unappropriated and inactive ; but a still greater portion misapplied and perverted.

They who most enjoy life, are often the least careful for its preservation. It is generally the feeble and unhappy who cling to life with so much tenacity. The explanation may be, that the future is estimated by the present and the past. What is known imparts a colouring to what is unknown. A mind already filled with satisfaction has no place for solicitude or fear. A mind long habituated to grief does not easily promise itself better things ; nor is it capable of vivid conceptions of happiness. To feel ardent desires for enjoyment, some portion of it must be already experienced.

A man of proper demeanour will be unassuming towards inferiors, but exact becoming respect from his equals and superiors.

As the invention and perfection of any thing rarely proceed from the same person, so it frequently happens that he who only improves on the discoveries of another, reaps the principal advantage of them.

Almost all motions in nature are graceful. The slow, majestic travelling of the mountain mist and of the clouds; the rapid and infinitely varied flight of birds; the winding ascent of the cottage chimney smoke; and the ever-changing undulations and swellings of the ocean, strike the most ordinary observer. The reasons that mankind are often inelegant in their movements, are partly, the influence of debility, or of artificial habits, occasioning a defective action of the muscular system; partly, the operation of mental feelings, producing constraint or affectation.

It is in the game of life as in the game of chess; each strives to gain as much, and to lose as little, as possible.

Man often acquires just so much knowledge as to discover his ignorance, and attains so much experience as to regret his follies, and then dies.

Few are not more governed by general opinion, than by the decisions of reason.

Experience, which many affect to value so highly, is mostly the effect of disappointment or pain, and almost invariably comes too late to be of much practical advantage.

Scandal is the sport of its authors, the dread of fools, and the contempt of the wise.

Contrary to the usual maxim, much less excellence is necessary to adorn a high than a low station; for to the popular eye, eminence of rank will conceal or soften a multitude of blemishes, which would be noticed and criticised in a meaner sphere.

In proportion to the increase of refinement, is the interest produced by delineations of ruder times. This is perhaps occasioned, in part, by the novelty of the scenes described; in part also by a latent contrast in favour of present manners and comforts.

At first sight it appears as if wealth and rank, not intellect, governed the world; but a closer inspection, and more comprehensive survey, may satisfy of the contrary.

Our life ought to consist chiefly of meditation and action.* The past affords most materials for the former; the present, for the latter.

We are always less concerned, in reality, with the past or the future, than with the present; yet the latter occupies fewest of our thoughts.

Though it is ascertained that the inhabitants of cities and large towns do not, on the average, attain the same age as those who reside in the country, yet their life may be regarded as of longer duration, because more filled with actions and events.

One epitaph is sufficiently comprehensive for most persons: 'Here lies A MORTAL.' In that word is comprised a brief space of trivial joys, and trivial sorrows. The rest is a phantom.

If solitude deprives of the benefit of advice, it also excludes from the mischief of flattery. But the absence of others' applause is generally supplied by the flattery of one's own breast.

To the intellectual, solitude has its attractions because it affords most scope for freedom of thought; to the proud and independent, because

* Homo ad intelligendum et agendum natus est.—Cic.

it allows the greatest latitude to manners and actions. On the whole, a retired mode of life is connected with most independence. Society is founded on a voluntary sacrifice of liberty in some particulars, for the sake of advantage in others.

It is with our affections as with bodies under the influence of gravitation ; the nearer we approach the objects of our regard, the more strongly are our desires attracted towards them.

Deep admiration for others is frequently connected with a degree of pain, arising from a latent consciousness of personal inferiority.

The novelty of life is commonly exhausted before death comes to change the scene.

Solitude may fill us with ideas of self-importance ; but we have only to mingle a little with the world, to discover our own insignificance.

A smile on a melancholy countenance, is like a temporary gleam of sunshine on a dreary landscape.

There are many apparent, but no real pauses in life, which is as a tide flowing in steadily and rapidly, bringing onward the bark of death to carry us to eternity.

Friendship is more firmly secured by lenity towards failings, than by attachment to excellencies. The former is valued as a kindness which cannot be claimed; the latter is considered as the payment of a debt to merit.

Most persons, when placed beneath their circumstances or merits, act beneath themselves. Yet minds of the first order are less dependent on rank, or the estimation of others. Cicero, whose opinion of himself appears to have varied with his fortunes, seems a remarkable exception.

The ascendancy of a superior mind is almost uniformly felt, whatever may be the sphere in which it happens to be placed.

In argument, the last refuge of some persons is, simply that they have lived so long; a plea calculated to excite only pity or contempt, that they have lived so long without being cured of their folly.

A residence in the country has the advantage of securing from the ephemeral intelligence which circulates in capitals, and which produces excitement, generally without profit.

It is commonly supposed, that when those of the same profession speak in disparagement of each

other, they are actuated only by envy or jealousy. The cause may as often be, that they are more competent judges on the subject than others. There is usually a reciprocal good feeling among professional men whose merits are indisputable.

To the wealthy and the vacant, delay or inattention in trivial matters, is much less tolerable than to those who have a variety of occupations to fill the mind.

There is mostly some real, though often latent cause of unhappiness, in those who are addicted to severity and passion.

Generous natures will act the most honourably when treated with honour. It requires stern principle, and an elevation of character, to act honourably under dishonourable treatment.

It is not true that variation of behaviour towards persons of different characters and circumstances, is indicative of a temporising or disingenuous mind. To exhibit a uniformity of manners to all without distinction, would argue a want of penetration, or a want of sensibility.

Our own hearts present us with a miniature picture of mankind; and by knowing ourselves, we in a manner know all men.

Life seems, on a deliberate retrospect, little else than an accumulation of errors. If spent without action, it is mostly vain ; if diversified with events, it is commonly replete with folly.

It would be a remarkable circumstance, if, while the habits of the lower tribes of creation are materially dependent on their structure, the habits and actions of man should not be affected by his physical conformation.

Women are little moved by argument, or the deeper qualities of mind ; but are easily captivated by appearance, facility of manners, and kindness. Feeling, rather than intellect, is their world.

The greater part of current opinions are held by the majority without evidence, either intellectual or experimental.

It is not unusual for persons to spend the great proportion of their days in the bustle of the world, yet to acquire scarcely the most superficial knowledge of human nature. They have beheld the surface of society, and contemplated more or less of its modes and sentiments ; but as to the real springs which give movement to

the affairs of mankind, or the discriminative features of individual character, they are almost entirely ignorant.

Perhaps the opinions which we successively adopt and abandon, are more numerous than those which we retain.

The temperament of some is to act only on the suggestions of their own minds. They are sure to oppose the views framed for them by others ; but almost equally sure to adopt right ones, if the mere facts of the case are presented, and their judgments left to form a spontaneous decision.

The effect of most persons' pursuits is to feed the body, and starve the mind. A wise man would rather feed the mind and starve the body.

The reason why intimate acquaintance seldom enhances esteem, is because the contemplation of character at a distance allows scope for imagination and kindness. Nearness dispels the illusions of fancy, and forces truth, however unpleasing, on the mind.

There are two cases in which a person may endeavour to amplify his own merits or importance ; from motives of ostentation, or from a well-founded persuasion that he is not sufficiently

appreciated. But in neither instance are his intentions likely to be accomplished ; for in the one he is the object of contempt ; in the other, of compassion.

The greatest changes, both in nature and in life, are brought about by invisible causes.

The unhappy are frequently characterized by a disposition to self-indulgence, as if to compensate themselves for the wrongs or sufferings which they endure.

Policy often accords to the severe and the disliked, more attentions and deference than to the amiable and beloved. The object is, to escape the effects of collision with disagreeable qualities.

It is possible to indulge too great contempt for mere success, which is frequently connected with all the practical advantages of merit itself, and with several advantages that merit alone can never command.

Effusions of mind display the dignity, the pursuits of war, the degradation of man.

The sweets of events are often enjoyed most by those who are only spectators or readers.

It requires little penetration to discover, that the pursuits are mostly vain, of which the pleasure lies chiefly in the chase.

Commotion and excitement, even when pernicious, are sources of pleasure, because life is attended with so much monotony. Hence also the chief interest of dramatic representations, and of the narratives of history and fiction.

Perhaps we are influenced by contracted and selfish views in ascribing so much importance to human life, which has ever been liable to great and indiscriminate waste, and for the preservation of which only the same general arrangements appear to have been made, as exist with respect to the inferior orders of the animated creation.

It requires more philosophy than most philosophers possess, to appreciate the effect of appearance.

With some persons, a sufficient reason for espousing a sentiment, is its almost unanimous rejection by others; and an adequate motive for continuance in error, is its thorough confutation.

It is frequently impolitic, as well as unkind, to restrain the expression of anxious feelings; as,

in many instances, no portion of ill-temper dictates their utterance, which is, besides, the most effectual means of their evaporation.

Time sheds a softness on remote objects or events, as local distance imparts to the landscape a smoothness and mellowness which disappear on a nearer approach.

If you desire to render others subservient to your wishes, in cases where no appeal is made to their own interests, you will be more likely to succeed if they are prosperous and happy, than if poor or discontented.

The inhabitants of cities perceive things in their generalities; those of the country, in their individual aspect. A power of observation or description may be employed with much more effect in the latter sphere, than in the former.

There is a tendency in men to become, or to continue, what they are thought to be. If the character of any is wavering, an intimation of distrust or aversion will probably fix it for the worse, as they will feel that, under any circumstances, they can but be disesteemed,

It is long ere the mind learns to estimate things by their utility, not by their appearance. A proper view of human littleness will produce the effect.

There are myriads of illusions which it is not in the least desirable to remove. The whole of life, indeed, is a prolonged illusion, or rather a succession of illusions; and if mankind could always know in what cases their hopes are visionary, life would almost arrive at a stand, a great portion of its happiness be lost, and duty itself often remain undischarged.

Concealment of purposes and feelings is so natural to some minds, that it is frequently adopted in cases which are absolutely indifferent

A spirit of resolution and perseverance is more dependent on physical constitution, than on argument or self-interest.

Maxims for the economy of time are of small value. The generality have no time to economise, and most others have more time than they know how to employ.

There is perhaps no occasion on which a person feels so desirous to know the thoughts of another, as in a case of undisclosed love.

Many err in few things more than in their estimate of the intellectual character of the wealthy, which is in general sufficiently indifferent.

Fickleness in friendship, or in a good cause, is often combined with the negative advantage of fickleness in resentment, or in the pursuit of unworthy objects.

Village influence is greater than what is exercised in towns or cities, whether for good or evil.

In general, quite as much talent is requisite for the management of private and ordinary affairs, as of those which relate to a whole community, and which are frequently, though in many respects without reason, considered the most important.

One principal impediment to extemporary public speaking might be obviated, or at least diminished, by the simple reflection, that the largest audience is only an assemblage of units; for what man of ordinary abilities finds difficulty or embarrassment in expressing his ideas on any subject with which he is familiar, before a single individual?

The foolish are sometimes silent about trivial things, from an idea of their importance; the

wise, from a proper sense of their insignificance.

Intellectual superiority occasions little difference in manners or conduct. Nature guarantees a general similarity of action. Opinions and fancies, which fall more within the province of man's control, and an identity of which is not essential to the purposes of life, admit of indefinite variety.

If we can suppose that angels are at all acquainted with the interior minds of men, how ridiculous must appear the exorbitant ideas of self-importance which the generality entertain. People are chagrined or distressed if they fail to secure a certain station in society, or if their interests or reputations are rudely touched. Yet what are the interests or reputations of an ephemeral insect?

There is great absurdity in despising mere ignorance; yet it is an absurdity which some who affect to be philosophers, are the most prompt to indulge.

Topics of conversation among the multitude are generally persons—sometimes things—scarcely ever principles.

A man's qualities and propensities are mainly dependent on his physical constitution.

They who mingle much in the affairs of life, may soon discover enough of other people's folly, as well as their own. Such as live chiefly in retirement, often discover neither the one nor the other.

In the petty depredations of populous towns or cities, the gain is generally the sole motive. In those of rural districts, there is frequently a mixture of spite and revenge.

The style of half jest, half earnest, is seldom adopted in cases of unlimited confidence.

The heart is often most deeply attracted by those who exhibit appearances of general indifference, combined with partial and unexpected gleams of affection; as the unintermitted brightness of the moon is less interesting than her occasional beamings from behind a cloud.

If, as has been alleged, the gods sport with the designs of mortals, it is to be hoped that they mingle at least a little pity with their mirth.

A man seldom attaches much value to things in which he is indisputably pre-eminent, though

he may love the concomitants of his superiority, as, the fame or profit which it yields. Remoteness, and the absence of familiarity, appear essential to the existence of strong or lasting admiration.

Right comes to most at last; but generally when the heart is withered, and contemns the boon.

It is a gratification to some minds to feel that they are of consequence enough to be tormented with importunity.

The honey and the gall of life, its best and its worst, are for the most part exhausted long before its termination.

Our notions of magnitude, and in great measure, of dignity and importance, are dependent on the mechanism of the eye. A certain difference in its natural lenses would have given it the effect of a magnifying glass, or of a telescope. A difference of another sort would have reduced the apparent size of objects to a Lilliputian standard.

Concessions, though not due to justice, but originating in diffidence, or love to quietude, have sometimes the effect of exasperating hostility; being interpreted by the offended party as an

acknowledgment of the goodness of his cause, and therefore awakening resentment for the supposed wrong of the previous opposition or grievance.

To doubt is sometimes a mark of wisdom, but on many occasions it is the extremity of folly.

The pettiness of man and his affairs is strikingly exhibited in the diminutive appearance of his edifices and enclosures, as seen from a lofty and distant eminence.

A person who wishes merely to push his fortune in the world, need concern himself little with the transactions of former periods, or bestow much labour on the acquisition of mental accomplishments or refinement. All that he has to do, is to keep a steady eye on the object before him, and to make himself familiar with passing events and characters.

Truths possess only half their value, till confirmed by experience.

A positive loss, though trivial, often excites more regret than the absence of a great possible attainment.

Such is the influence of prosperity on the kindly feelings, that prior neglect is seldom an obstacle

to the acceptableness of present attentions. For the most part we are disposed to treat faults as they deserve, only while we suffer from their effects.

Most persons are weary of themselves and their own reflections, and gladly avail themselves of means to direct their thoughts into a new channel.

Where there is real superiority, there is seldom ostentation ; the consciousness of merit alone appearing to satisfy, without the reputation or eclat.

In one sense, every thing we see or hear is wonderful ; in another sense, nothing is wonderful.

It is an ordinary practice with biographers as well as men in general, when they meet with a melancholy nature, to endeavour to account for it by the influence of circumstances or events ; whereas it is commonly the effect of constitution or temperament, and would probably have existed under any other circumstances.

So far as we can perceive, or as any important purposes relating to the present state are concerned, the greater part of mankind might as well

have never been born. Some mystery must lie beneath the veil which hangs over the circumstances and destiny of man, and which we are only baffled in our attempts to penetrate.

Longevity is much dependent on the feelings and occupations of the mind. Except by the intervention of accidents, or of sudden and formidable disease, a person will hardly die while his thoughts are engrossed, and his hopes expanded, by some attractive enterprise or project.

The situation of some compels them to seek enjoyment almost exclusively in their own resources. In that case, who shall censure them with severity, although they acquire a considerable portion of selfishness, or form a habit of referring things to themselves, rather than to others.

Some who in reality possess affectionate dispositions, exhibit a cold or repulsive demeanour, from an idea, of which they are perhaps scarcely conscious, that the indulgence or manifestation of deep emotion is a weakness in character.

We are apt to consider our views or attainments, a considerable period since, as comparatively immature or contracted; and to congratulate ourselves on account of the wisdom or superiority

which we fancy we now possess ; little imagining, that at some future season, we shall probably reflect on our present opinions and acquisitions with equal indifference or contempt. Thus it may ultimately be with regard to the whole of life, which is only the dawn of our being, or the commencement of an endless series of progressions.

Persons of feeble memory and dull imagination, are ever prone to exaggerate the present, whether advantageous or otherwise, and to miscalculate the past in proportion.

Where feeling is the most intense, there is often little external indication of it, sometimes even the appearance of unusual apathy. The depth and strength of the current preserve unruffled calmness on the surface.

It is generally supposed that uniformity characterises the operations and habits of the insect parts of creation. Perhaps the opinion is owing to the imperfection of our senses, which may be unable to discern the differences that actually exist. To the view of some other orders of being, whose organs of perception may be accommodated chiefly to objects of considerable magnitude, man may possibly seem as diminutive as insects do to him-

self, and his actions and methods of life appear equally limited and uniform.

Of all illusions, those which the mind practises on itself are the most numerous, and the most incurable.

It is not for man, when the heart is labouring with grief or sensibility, to compel his emotions to rest by the artificial assumption of gaiety or of stoical indifference, although the attempt is sometimes made.

Why do we fancy that night was made exclusively for repose, since creation is then not unfrequently embellished with as much beauty, though not of the same description, as during the prevalence of day? At least it may be worth while occasionally to trespass on the customary order of life, and not allow the bright stars and solemn clouds to hang over a slumbering world without notice. To live methodically for the sake of method is absurd.

The state of the dead is considered by some as a kind of slumber or repose. I should rather take life to be a slumber, from which, and from the dreams with which it is blended, we awake at death.

Short-lived as man undoubtedly is, he in many instances survives himself. His soul often dies before his body.

Smiles may play on the countenance, while Hope and Joy lie mouldering in the heart beneath, like the moonbeams shining over a grave.

After great exhilaration, the spirits sometimes fall as rapidly as the sail of a vessel when the wind suddenly ceases.

Numerous as are the advantages of a country life, they are all perhaps counterbalanced by the separation which a residence in cities generally affords from petty criticism, petty resentments, and petty notions.

It is often melancholy natures that make the most noise in the world, and that are the most prolific in vices, or in distinguished virtues or enterprises.

People are not to be considered as hypocritical, because their conduct exhibits a deviation from their former professions or behaviour. Perhaps there are few hypocrites in the world; but men are themselves deceived, alter their own opinions, or become the victims of unforeseen temptations.

Loquacity is not so censurable or frivolous as some imagine. The French, one of the most intelligent and refined nations in Europe, are loquacious. The Turks, the most ignorant and barbarous of any people pretending to civilization, are noted for taciturnity. Among the agricultural classes in our own country, there is less conversation than among the artificers or tradespeople, who are in the main proportionally more enlightened and acute.

Perhaps the controversy whether the notes of the nightingale are plaintive or lively, is to be decided by the state of individual feeling at the time. If the listener is in a melancholy mood, the strain will probably be thought sad; if in a cheerful state the reverse.

The littleness of man is seldom more conspicuous than amidst his attempts to appear great, as on occasions of public display or pageantry. The pomp may astonish the multitude, but will lead the wise to reflect or sigh.

It is necessary for the mind to have some surer basis of repose than humanity; for a very limited knowledge of the world is sufficient to show, that persons in general care little for their professed friends or acquaintances while living, and soon forget them when dead.

Ambitious minds rarely concern themselves deeply with the affairs or curiosities of ancient times. Theirs is the living world, which contains scope for their activity, and supplies the elements of their advancement. It is chiefly persons of passive character, who are most interested by the researches of antiquarian lore.

The brightest things in life minister to those which are the least refined and most ordinary. The mind waits on the body, and genius and literature are made subservient to the vulgar strifes and passions of men.

If we can extract a portion of pleasure or benefit, though small and transient, from the things which we possess, and which are considered as our own, merely because placed under our control, our expectations from them should be satisfied. Some minds appear to disdain objects or gratifications of a trivial or fleeting nature; yet what is life, with its complication of interests, but a succession of frivolous and ephemeral things?

Men are brought much less closely into connexion with each other in populous and crowded places, than in small towns or villages.

Some who are themselves addicted to censure, arrest the censure of others, and seem desirous of monopolizing the privilege of disparagement.

If we wait for what we may suppose the most favourable season to engage in any enterprise, or till the time when we imagine we shall be best qualified for successful efforts, life will probably be spent with little effect.

Some express themselves more strongly in disapprobation than they deliberately think ; others think with more severity than they choose to speak. Of the two descriptions, the former are much the less unpleasing.

Artifice is an attribute of weakness, and prevails most in those who feel themselves inadequate to accomplish their designs in a direct or compulsory manner. Sometimes, however, it appears to be selected merely for the purpose of affording play to a busy and versatile mind.

If a person has self-confidence, or only its appearance, few will question his pretensions ; while most will be ready to distrust him who seems to distrust himself. The test however is unfair.

Many sacrifice much of the substantial happiness of life to fastidious notions of punctuality and order.

The actors amidst scenes of danger commonly feel less timidity than mere spectators, simply because the efforts in which they are engaged engross the thoughts, and allow them no opportunity of dwelling on the perils of their situation. Pre-occupation of mind will explain thousands of phenomena in the conduct and feelings of man.

If there is any one attribute common to man, which is engrafted on his original nature, and entirely the growth of circumstances, perhaps that attribute is prejudice. To meet a person entirely exempt from its operation, may be pronounced, if not impossible, at least one of the most difficult things in the world. It is not easy to say whether prejudice resides most in mansions or in cottages; in courts or in camps; among the clergy or the laity; philosophers or the vulgar; authors or their readers. The forms which it assumes vary with each individual mind, and are almost as numerous as the several opinions of men: and what seems remarkable, those whom it most sways, are generally least conscious of its influence.

A residence in capitals and cities is every day becoming less necessary, in consequence of the multiplication of facilities for travelling, and for the circulation of intelligence and improvements.

A much smaller portion of interest is connected with journeys in England at the present time, than must have existed in more ancient and uncultivated periods. The remotest places are now pretty accurately known: travelling is also marked with less of adventure and variety, as there are now no extensive forests or pathless commons to be traversed: to which may be added, that a considerable uniformity, in point of appearances, manners, and language, begins to prevail in every part of our island.

It is often a misfortune to have energetic minds, with contracted spheres of operation. Yet more persons have scope for action, who are destitute of the impulse, than those who have the impulse without the scope. The reason perhaps is, that where the means of activity abound, there are commonly the means of self-indulgence or luxury; in consequence, the love of pleasure frequently conquers the love of enterprise.

Neglect of the arts of address, and of the attentions necessary to obtain or secure esteem, is often owing to nothing but a spirit of indolence, which

is averse to the requisite trouble, and unwilling to renounce any petty habit or gratification.

It may appear singular, that while so many professedly aim at the acquisition of wealth, scarcely any make friendship a specific object of pursuit; but that, in most instances, it is the offspring of secondary or incidental circumstances. The explanation may be, that the advantages of friendship are not sufficiently palpable to satisfy the ordinary class of feelings. Perhaps it is also supposed, that the search would generally be unavailing in the absence of wealth or influence; and that riches being once attained, it will be easy to purchase friendship, or what may supply its place.

The transition, in habits of life, from what is natural, to that which is artificial or scientific, is constantly increasing; although, in many cases, the change is little interesting to an unsophisticated mind. There is something, for instance, much less picturesque in judging of the weather by means of the barometer, while we sit immured in our habitations, than by the methods in use among our ancestors, who formed their conjectures, which were on the whole perhaps, nearly as correct, by the flights and appearances of birds, by observing the clouds, the winds, cattle, &c.

The progress of arts and refinement is every day shutting us out more and more from nature.

Perhaps each person in the world is now feeling the consequences of events which happened many thousand years ago ; and those events, it is not improbable, may continue to operate till the consummation of all things.—The remote influence of circumstances may be compared to the effect occasioned by throwing a stone into a lake, where the circle produced is multiplied, and in each successive undulation enlarged, although with diminished strength in proportion to its circuit, and its distance from the central point of commencement.

Physicians are like the general class of friends, very plausible where their aid is not required, and somewhat serviceable on occasions of minor exigence, but of trifling utility in circumstances of urgent necessity.

There are few persons whose errors it is worth while to refute: if let alone for a time, they will probably refute themselves, either by recanting their former errors, or by espousing new ones.

The most compliant dispositions are generally the least firm or trust-worthy.

If the history of the enterprise and activity displayed by the most eminent men in different ages and countries, could be accurately traced, its origin would often be found in some bodily ailment, or early misfortune, which has produced a restlessness of spirit requiring tumultuous scenes, or busy efforts, for its occupation.

It is astonishing what a spirit of general apathy pervades the multitude of mankind, at least in cases which make no appeal to their senses, or to their immediate secular interests. Almost any calamity, in the least degree remote, is contemplated with indifference; and death itself is commonly encountered with a kind of sullen insensibility. The fact is, their perceptions are so limited, and their imaginations so obtuse, that distant effects or possibilities are neither discerned nor appreciated.

It is difficult to determine which produces more ravages on the frame, the wear of thought, or the wasting influence of passion.

Almost all human pursuits are equally important, or rather, equally insignificant. If the mind is interested to the same extent, the chase of butterflies is perhaps as wise as the chase of wealth or distinction,

Society appears to require something which may be a kind of substitute for the practice of auricular confession among the Catholics; chiefly, however, as an expedient for disburdening the mind of its feelings, without the apprehension of farther disclosure. Friendship might in some degree suffice, but it is too rare, and generally too feeble, for the purpose. How few indeed are there, to whom, except in the case supposed, a person would feel confidence in laying open the interior movements of his mind!

A person is not to estimate his influence by the degree of external deference which he receives. A better proof of influence is undesigned imitation, or the adoption of a mode of conduct in unison with his maxims or practice.

I sometimes amuse myself with fancying the condition of a man entirely debarred from the conversation and sight of his fellow-creatures, and living under the persuasion that he shall never emerge from that state of perfect solitude. How different would be his pursuits and ideas from those which commonly prevail! Supposing him furnished with the means of luxury, and the appendages of refinement, how few of them would he actually employ! The greater part of the knowledge and accomplishments which mankind value so highly, would to him be utterly useless.

Intellectual occupations would almost certainly be relinquished, even if they had before been the objects of his fondest attention ; as there would be no person to whom he could communicate his sentiments, none with whose powers or attainments his own might be brought into comparison or competition, and no prospect of fame or of recompense to stimulate his efforts. In point of mind, he would perhaps descend almost to a level with the least civilized portions of the race ; and in respect of enjoyment, would probably be inferior to the brutes. It is somewhat remarkable, that among all the singular cases which the records of the human species afford, none should be found exactly parallel to the one supposed, which might have served to elucidate the extent to which man is influenced by man, in the formation of his opinions, tastes, character, and happiness. The fabulous history of Robinson Crusoe comes the nearest to the hypothesis in question, and is valuable as exhibiting a philosophical portraiture of human nature under extraordinary circumstances.

The number of things considered remarkable in any particular age or nation, gradually diminishes with the lapse of time, so that ultimately very few characters or events that once attracted attention, remain known or conspicuous ; as the objects and scenes of a landscape lessen or fade

away to the eye, in proportion as they are left behind in a journey.

A man of numerous and ardent desires is of all beings the most dependent.

There are many to whom intellectual tests would be presented in vain, but whose talents are drawn out and invigorated by dangers and difficulties.

No wise man is proud, but many wise men are vain, and many also occasionally assume the appearance of pride.

There is more affection in the world than friendship, more friendship than philanthropy, and more philanthropy than candour.

Attention to minor circumstances of a picturesque nature, so far from betokening the possession of superior comfort, is frequently the indication of a vacant or unsatiated mind. A cottage with roses and woodbines twining around it, is a pleasing object to the sight; but the reason why so much care has been expended on its decorations, is, probably, because the owner has more leisure than he can otherwise employ, and little that is substantial or dignified to occupy his thoughts. Persons most study niceties of

arrangement, or ornamental appearances, when detached from more interesting or lucrative occupations. Yet perhaps it is as wise to spend time in the cultivation of flowers or scenery, as in the pursuits of wealth or ambition.

Love nurtured amidst grief, is often of the deepest character ; because affliction tends to soften the feelings, and to produce a spirit of sensibility,—the element in which love breathes and flourishes.

Men often cease to admire or to hate, not because reason or justice interposes with its authority, but because they grow weary of having their thoughts running without variation in the same channel.

There is a certain graceful and dignified mode of accepting a favour, which has almost the effect of making the obliging party feel as if receiving, rather than conferring, an obligation.

Opposition is perhaps more frequently continued from an apprehension of having given irreconcilable offence, than from a desire to perpetuate animosity.

It is pleasant to read about rural pursuits, but very different to be engaged in them, unless the

mind be neither sophisticated by artificial life on the one hand, nor debased by grovelling or avaricious views on the other. Virgil, in his description of the benefits of a country life, intimates that they may be possessed, without being appreciated or enjoyed. The ordinary class of husbandmen, indeed, are too little refined in their sentiments, to relish properly the advantages of their situation :

‘ O fortunatos nimium, *sua si bona nôrint*,
Agricolæ! quibus ipsa, procul discordibus armis,
Fundit humo facilem victum justissima tellus.’

The contrast which he proceeds to draw between a splendid life in the city, and the simple enjoyments which rural life affords, is almost enough to make one feel in love with the country. What pleasing images are presented to the mind in the following passage :

‘ At *secura quies, et nescia fallere vita*,
Dives opum variarum ; at *latis otia fundis*,
Speluncæ, vivique lacus ; at *frigida Tempe*,
Mugitusque boûm, mollesque sub arbore somni,
Non absunt.’ —————

One of the most delightful treatises that antiquity has transmitted to us, is the Œconomics of Xenophon, in which the pursuits and pleasures of husbandry are described in that unostentatious and beautiful manner which best befits the subject.

None but those who spend considerable time in the open air, and possess the habit of contemplating nature with attention, can form proper ideas of the ever-varying hues and appearances produced by the vicissitudes of our climate in the scenery of the earth and sky. It is worth while occasionally to endure the darkness and buffetings of the storm, to behold afterwards the sweet breakings out of the sun, and the rollings of the clouds. The gipsy mode of life, were it combined with sensibility or taste, would be most favourable to observations of this nature.

PART IV.

ON HAPPINESS

THERE are three principal sources of happiness; the imagination, the affections, and the understanding or judgment. The first is casual and fugitive; the second liable to counteraction or failure; the last is the most certain and durable. A combination of all, in connexion with religion, would form the summit of human felicity.

The mind must already be somewhat happy, before it is open to general sources of happiness. Persons, accordingly, with diseased bodies, or of unfortunate circumstances, fix attention chiefly on things the contemplation of which is calculated to increase unhappiness; as, their own distresses, or the vices and miseries of others. The satirist is generally created by illness, melancholy, or disappointment.—On the other hand, one pleasure frequently begets a thousand, by putting the mind into a state which leads it to extract enjoyment from a multiplicity of sources.

A ruling passion excludes from many pleasures, although the want of them is not felt. Unless certain pursuits or scenes which, to a person exempt from the influence of a ruling passion, are so many springs of delight, have a bearing not very remote on the principal object, they are slighted and neglected. If, therefore, a ruling passion be not gratified, a man is less happy under its control than without it; and perhaps so even when gratified, unless the object be very noble and commanding.

When we are unfit for action, we are generally unfit for enjoyment.

Man seems incapable, with his present faculties, of much happiness at once. His sources of happiness may be changed, but the more enjoyment he receives from some, the less he derives from others.

It would be no slight mitigation of sorrow, to allow painful incidents to affect the mind only in proportion to their influence on our general welfare, or our eternal destiny. Yet it is in the nature of grief to bind down the faculties to present circumstances and sensations, and to forget that they will shortly have passed away, leaving no more trace behind than the track of a ship in the ocean.

I see the folly of many persons in losing the end while intent on the means, and making themselves miserable for the sake of being happy.

In order to enjoy any particular good, it seems necessary, in the present state, that there should be some evil as a counterpart, to give it a zest. Riches, for instance, are not the most valued or enjoyed by those who possess the amplest internal or independent resources; but by the feeble-minded, and such as are conscious of their own insufficiency.

Had the Almighty appointed man to live on the spontaneous products of the earth, vice and misery would have been much more prevalent. They who have to pursue some daily occupation for a livelihood, seldom imagine that they are happier than they probably would be, if their time and amusements were more at their own command. It is the principal aim of fashionable life to provide a substitute for a business or profession.

Cheerfulness originating in buoyancy of disposition, is more graceful and more permanent than that which arises from the reception of particular benefits. The latter is like a sudden gush of water, which is soon exhausted or dried up; the former is like a perennial fountain, and equivalent to the

effect occasioned by the continual reception of benefits, each time augmenting in value; for nothing less would maintain in cheerfulness a temperament naturally phlegmatic.

In almost every successive stage of being, mankind are looking forward to something ulterior; and this they continue to do, till life approaches its termination. If we cannot be happy now, there is little probability that we shall ever be so.

To be pleased with trivial things, is one great means of happiness. Yet in proportion as the mind becomes enlarged and refined, it is less disposed to receive gratification from minor causes. If we look at facts, we shall perhaps discover reason to suspect, that the most gifted minds are often the least happy. Mental eminence sometimes does little more for its possessor, than debar from a multitude of subordinate pleasures.

There are two excellent, though obvious means of happiness; to make duty a pleasure, and to cultivate the habit of contemplating our advantages rather than our misfortunes.

It is hard to sit down in life contented without any extraordinary incidents or enjoyments; yet to do so should be the effort of all.

Mankind get a few fragments of pleasure, notwithstanding repeated disappointments. This leads them to make the most of life, and renders it in some degree tolerable.

Every man that would have peace, must be content to let the world go on in its folly.

Such is the lot of humanity, that in general we are not qualified to receive any enjoyment, unless prepared to despise it.

The great means of preserving the mind from petty annoyance, is to have it pre-occupied with something important.

It is a main thing in happiness, whether the follies of men excite mirth or irritation.

Extract the sweets from the comforts you have, before complaining of the want of other comforts.

To entertain a few, yet only a few desires or expectations, is one means of happiness; for in this case the mind will have something to give it excitement, while its views will generally be more than realized.

A little will sometimes produce pain, when a great deal is necessary to communicate pleasure.

In general, it is much easier for man to be rendered miserable than happy.

It is foolish to close the mind to general sources of enjoyment, because destitute of some particular good. Experience shows that the indirect pleasures of life frequently surpass those which are regarded as the principal.

The most rigid philosophy, and the most careless mirth, are often intimately connected, insomuch that the latter is frequently but the offspring of the former. The one discovers the vanity of human pursuits and wishes; the other seizes present enjoyment to compensate for the calamity.

I never believe a man when he tells me that he is quite happy, for that is not the portion of humanity. I seldom believe a man when he tells me that he is quite miserable; as there are few instances, perhaps none, of unmixed sorrow; and because the deepest grief is so absorbed in feeling, that it is incapable of disclosure by words. Mediocrity of enjoyment is the lot of most. Great advantages are combined with special deductions, and severe disasters are generally connected with mitigations.

When I part with any thing to which I have long been accustomed, I part with all the associations connected with it, which to me are perhaps far more valuable than the object by which it is replaced, though in itself much superior.

It is astonishing with how few external advantages a person may live in a state of comfort, and intellectual advancement.

If all would abstain from what they evidently can avoid, namely, injuring others in their persons, property, reputation, or feelings, nine-tenths of the unhappiness of life would vanish. The miseries which man wilfully inflicts on man, constitute the principal part of human suffering.

It seems not improbable that a considerable proportion of the happiness of childhood arises from its involuntary restraints. If people of mature years would be more happy, they must practise more self-denial and discipline, even where no circumstances otherwise impose the necessity of restriction.

I can hardly conceive it possible for a person, with right views and feelings, to be altogether free from melancholy.

A private individual, possessed of competence, taste, and an interest in others' friendship and affection, has more independence, and the materials of more happiness, than the greatest minister of state.

So fantastic is the mind of man, that when surrounded with a profusion of enjoyments, it will often abandon them almost entirely, and seek its gratification in some minor objects, on which its fancy or caprice has bestowed an artificial value.

Let men multiply their comforts as they please, the inevitable miseries of life will still be many.

In seasons of temporary dejection, it is perhaps undesirable to seek relief in objects or scenes that generally administer delight, lest their effect should be impaired for the future by association.

All men secretly feel that life is full of misery; yet the assertion of the fact is commonly ungrateful, because the mind is ever in search of something to divert it from a sense of its misery.

Nothing in nature tends so much to soothe and refresh the mind, as a beautiful prospect on a fine summer's evening, when the sun gilds every object with his parting beams, while a few solitary clouds

travel slowly along the sky, and all creation smiles before sinking into repose.

A large proportion of what are called the miseries of life, would not be considered as such, were it not for our false pride, our impatience, caprice, and vanity. Can we suppose that angels, placed in our circumstances, would feel a thousandth part of the miseries that we endure?

Deep thought seems incompatible with that flow of animal feeling which is necessary to exhilaration of mind; consequently we may expect to find, that with a habit of profound reflection, will generally be connected a cast of melancholy.

So far as our knowledge extends, there are no orders of rational being except man, to whom an intermixture of happiness and misery is assigned. The angels in heaven experience nothing but joy; the devils in hell know nothing but torment.

The gratification of fancies and foibles is often productive of more pleasure than substantial benefits afford.

Many things by no means unalloyed with pain at the time of their occurrence, are pleasing in the retrospect; because Fancy, by a species of alchemy, separates the agreeable from the painful,

and adds a brightness to the objects of her selection.

Fame, and an accumulation of outward advantages, are feeble securities against melancholy; in part because the mind is capricious, and turns from enjoyments when lavished upon it in profusion; in part because possession leaves no scope for fancy, and in minds of the highest order suggests the disparity which ever subsists between their attainments and their capabilities.

Pleasure may be increased by many things which are inadequate to its production.

The happiness of life is more indebted to kindness than to intellect.

It is much easier to purchase intellectual than physical pleasures.

The pleasures of reason and the understanding have this recommendation, that they constantly increase with time; while those of fancy, friendship, and the senses, are proportionably impaired by the same cause.

A considerable part of mankind are endeavouring to provide for the happiness of some future period; but in the meanwhile, life passes

away, or the susceptibilities of enjoyment become extinct.

Whatever may be the real aspect of different objects or circumstances, they produce on some minds only a melancholy effect; as the clouds, however variegated or beautiful, cast on the earth but one uniform shade.

They who are most impetuous in the pursuit of happiness, usually meet with the severest disappointments. Happiness enters most freely into the mind which is the most tranquil in its desires.

It is possible to have almost all the qualifications for happiness, yet to feel little else than misery.

Good humour is not the product of philosophy, but of nature or of fortune.

In a rural and solitary walk, amidst the stillness and beauty of a summer's day, the mind may sometimes extract delight from the most trivial circumstances—from watching, perhaps, the shadows of the clouds travel slowly across the landscape. It is at such moments that the pettiness of life's cares and pleasures is strikingly evinced, as they are found capable of being conquered by the simple charms of nature.

A plenitude or perfection of enjoyment appears to render death an object of indifference. The cause may perhaps be, that the soul, being already filled with one emotion, that of joy, has no room for another, especially such a one as fear.

It is because we have but a small portion of enjoyment ourselves, that we feel so little pleasure in the good fortune of others. Is it possible for the happy to be envious?

The union of pride with affectionate feeling, a circumstance by no means uncommon, often occasions considerable unhappiness to its subject. The former assumes the appearance of sufficient internal or personal resources; while the latter requires the sympathy or affection of others, which is liable to be chilled or repelled by that appearance.

It is not in the midst of long-continued suffering, that the mind is most sensible of its severity. Familiarity with pain diminishes its acuteness, by blunting the sensibilities; or depth of sorrow, by absorbing the feelings, prevents any lively impression of a much happier state. The return of enjoyment, by suggesting ideas of contrast, occasions a more accurate estimate; as the shining sun after a temporary obscuration,

produces a more vivid idea of the previous darkness.

The amount of sensible pleasures is perhaps pretty equal among the different orders of mankind; but there is great difference in their respective shares of happiness, in points which relate to fancy, opinion, friendship, or intellect in general.

Present feelings, of whatever nature, are apt to be overrated, and the importance of prior feelings to be disparaged in proportion. The bliss of a few moments is sometimes felt as a compensation for a thousand pains; or a brief paroxysm of sorrow, as a counterbalance to a thousand pleasures. Yet former happiness was not the less valuable, because it is now succeeded by misery; nor was former misery the more tolerable, because it is now succeeded by happiness.

We frequently extract most enjoyment from things which cost us the least effort or expense.

A person of an avaricious or repining temper, connects in his mind his economical gains with his occasional losses; and is apt therefore to feel dissatisfaction, from an idea that the former are useless. A man of a better mould connects his economy rather with the pleasures which it assists

him to procure, and is in consequence less affected by the occurrence of unavoidable disasters. So different an effect, with regard to happiness, is produced by a difference in the association of ideas.

Objects that appear bright, are mostly distant or unattainable. Those which are possessed, are, through use and familiarity, slighted. From the whole circle, therefore, of outward things, we extract only partial and fugitive comfort.

In calculations on the means of happiness, it may be well to omit, or to reckon as of little consequence, those which are dependent on others.

Those persons may perhaps be considered the most happy, whose life is spent in the greatest activity. The busiest life affords sufficient intervals for ease or retirement, which is never much enjoyed without a considerable intermixture of active occupation.

He is but a spendthrift in happiness who squanders away feeling in unrestricted enjoyment, which is sure to leave the heart wasted and impoverished. The tide that rises the highest will sink the lowest, and leave but a naked and desolate scene behind. A moderate influx of

pleasure is best for man, whether he consult his happiness or his duty.

The illusion of joy is diminished by minute examination of its ingredients or causes.

The circumstances which most contribute to a man's happiness, generally make the least figure in his history or general reputation.

So far as the complexion of the mind is concerned, those are perhaps the happiest who blend more of the Epicurean in their nature, than of the Stoic or the Cynic ; who are free from immoderate ambition, especially the ambition of fame ; and disposed to partake the gifts and pleasures of Time as it passes.

The happiness of many is considerably dependent on the favourable opinion which they entertain of their mental character. If that opinion is not injurious to others, why attempt its removal, since happiness is so rare a commodity ?

An excess of joy, as well as an excess of sorrow, renders the mind unaffected by beautiful scenery.

The effect on the mind is much similar, whether sorrow arise from fictitious or from real sources. Yet while all shrink from actual distress, many feel

no hesitation to inflict on themselves the vexations and miseries of a story in romance.

The dead calm of the soul is less tolerable than its tempestuous agitations.

There are many things the want of which is painful, but of which the possession is scarcely at all productive of enjoyment. This is especially the case with things to which we have long been habituated. What a formidable evil would be the loss of light ! Yet its presence is accompanied with only a moderate degree of gratification.

We seldom possess any object that we desire, till it has lost most of its attractions.

Enlargement of mind, so far from necessarily producing happiness, is, unless rightly applied, and combined with correspondent circumstances, only a capacity for greater woe. Satan, with all his intellectual powers, is the most miserable being in the universe.

Beware of letting your comforts become means of pain.

Intellectual superiority is seldom necessary to the happiness of domestic life ; amiableness of disposition, always.

Our feelings, whether agreeable or painful, vivacious or melancholy, depend more on the constitution and state of the body, than on any other circumstance. Yet it seems a degradation to have some of our most exquisite emotions referred chiefly to physical causes.

When we have but few comforts we enjoy them the more.

It is commonly supposed, that there is a general equality of happiness; but this would be at least contrary to analogy. Health, beauty, strength, intellectual endowments, influence, are all distributed in endless proportions. Besides, only let two persons be placed together in contrast, one of whom has a countenance lighted up with cheerfulness and gaiety, the other an aspect in which a settled melancholy reigns. Is it possible to imagine, that both possess an equal share of enjoyment?—It may however be admitted, that rank or circumstances occasion little difference in happiness, which seems for the most part dependent on bodily constitution. The question is principally one of nerves, blood, and temperament.

Pride revels most in delights of its own creation, and often disdains such as are shared in common with others.

Man appears fated to experience more pleasure in the partial denial of his wishes, than in their complete gratification, which affords no scope for the indefinite exaggerations of hope or fancy.

To provide for the satisfaction of life as it passes, without attempting curious arrangements for subsequent periods, or indulging nice solicitude about remote contingencies, is the dictate of practical wisdom.

Which may be considered the more natural to man, melancholy or mirth? In general, perhaps, the former. Mirth is frequently but the effervescence or cheat of a perturbed and melancholy brain.

There is something at once magnificent and pleasing in the hypothesis, illustrated by Bishop Watson in his "Chemical Essays," that the whole vegetable world is endowed with a portion of sensation and enjoyment.

Were no intervals to elapse between the gratification of our different desires, the resources of the present state would speedily be exhausted; and if the enjoyments which it comprises were lavished upon us as rapidly as we are capable of

receiving them, a very few years would suffice to sum up the date of mortality.

The character, if not the degree, of a man's happiness, depends greatly on the colour and force of his imagination.

Man is so singularly constituted, that he sometimes experiences the greatest and most sublime pleasure under the excitement occasioned by circumstances of imminent danger, as amidst the tumult and perils of a battle. This is particularly the case with persons of genius, who in general are more susceptible of deep emotion than others, and whose minds are rarely filled or absorbed with placid scenes or incidents.

They who have only chance pleasures to depend upon, experience perhaps, on the whole, an equal amount of delight with those who draw from more uniform and permanent sources. The reasons are numerous: 1. Little care or difficulty is required for the attainment of casual pleasures. 2. Their suddenness prevents the mind from exhausting them by anticipation or thought. 3. They commonly include a wider range and larger variety. 4. Their zest is enhanced by the intermixture of less agreeable circumstances.

Misanthropy is sometimes the attendant of Genius, but is never without Misery for its companion. Man is so dependent for happiness on the sympathies of others, that he who hates his fellow-men, is perhaps of all beings the most deserving of compassion.

If nature is full of designs and contrivances for the promotion of happiness, the world is replete with evidences of the counteraction of those designs, which appear to apply rather to another order of existence than to the present. We seem, indeed, to be living amidst the ruins of a system, of which the object, though substantially benevolent, yet, in consequence of the altered condition of humanity, is now rarely attained; as when we behold the ornaments and curious workmanship of a dilapidated palace, we trace intentions and arrangements for the production of pleasurable effects, but feel that all this apparatus had reference to a prior and a vanished state of things. The system of nature contains a benevolent provision of means for enjoyment; the system of life and of society, in great measure nullifies that provision. In nature are the materials of happiness; in man, the elements of misery.

The possession of numerous and varied desires indicates a portion of mental enlargement, as the

most contracted minds have always the fewest wishes, however importunate. It also implies the participation of some degree of enjoyment; for to sorrow or despondency, desire is almost unknown. The same circumstance, however, is an evidence of partial unhappiness, because it expresses the existence of real or imaginary wants. In heaven, happiness is perfect; yet are there desires in heaven?

As happiness is to be measured, not by years, but by the number, extent, and refinement of the pleasures received, it is probable that many who die early, have a much larger amount of enjoyment than the greater part of those who linger to the extremity of old age. Who indeed that is wise, would hesitate in choosing between a short life filled with delight, and a long one chequered with suffering? The sentiment expressed in an ancient poetical fragment is not less true than melancholy: *Κρεῖσσον τὸ μὴ ζῆν ἔστιν, ἢ ζῆν ἀθλίως*—
 “It is better to die than to live in misery.”

In general, perhaps the most desirable sphere of life is that which brings us least into intimate contact with mankind. It seems more conducive to happiness to take a distant survey of life, and to contemplate the surface of society, than to investigate its interior mechanism, or enter into nice examinations of human conduct.

The melancholy attributed to the contemplative, is perhaps less than is commonly supposed; but after all reasonable deductions, it will probably be found considerable. One reason may be, that there are so many chasms in their life to be filled up. A mechanic or labourer has constant occupation, divided between the mind and the body; but it is placid, and does not weary the thoughts. The studious man has vigorous occupation, which is solely or chiefly intellectual, and cannot be without intermissions. In these intervals, the reflections are often desultory, which, from previous application, or the uninteresting nature of surrounding scenes, become not unfrequently tinged with gloom.—The facts also unfolded to deep thinkers, in the prosecution of their inquiries, are sometimes little adapted to nourish cheerfulness. Superficial contemplations of men and things, may not, indeed, occasion much pain; but those reflections which are the most penetrating and profound, usually comprehend a number of mysterious or bitter truths, altogether concealed from the shorter vision of common minds.—Besides, expansion and variety of thought are indirectly calculated to foster melancholy, by suggesting the contrast arising from the absence of corresponding progression in other respects. The soul may wander over the universe, and triumph in the consciousness of its strength, but feels, amidst all, that it is allied to dust, and that

while its attainments and capabilities are multiplied, its performances are limited, and life itself is stationary. On the whole, it is scarcely paradoxical or incorrect to affirm, that to be wise we must be unhappy; and that philosophy, which removes the colourings of fancy, and detects the realities of things, is often the companion of melancholy. "In much wisdom," said he who of all men was the wisest, "is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow."

PART V.

ON FANCY AND IMAGINATION.

FANCY has an extensive influence on morals. Some of the most powerful and dangerous feelings in existence, as those of ambition and envy, derive their principal nutriment from a cause apparently so insignificant.

The predominance of imagination is a great evil in a world, where we are conversant with so many rude or common-place circumstances. A state is conceivable in which imagination cannot be too vigorous in its exercise, and where its brightest colourings are only reflections or modifications of reality.

It is a fortunate circumstance, that sensibility and imagination are commonly defective, in cases of severe or long-protracted suffering.

When Reality becomes a foe, it is not unwise to seek a friend in Fancy.

The most imaginative minds are the most liable to disappointment; not only because apt to entertain hopes altogether chimerical, but because, of those objects which they anticipate, and which they ultimately attain, they generally form too minute a picture beforehand.

Philosophy delights in analysis; poetry, in combination. The former represents things as they are, for its leading object is instruction; the latter, as we would wish them to be, for its leading object is pleasure. Philosophy is concerned chiefly with causes; poetry, with effects. The one gives scope to the exercise of the judgment; the other, of the imagination. Philosophy presents us with an anatomical dissection; poetry exhibits the object clothed with flesh and blood, and animated with passion. The element of philosophy is argument; that of poetry, feeling. Between philosophy and poetry there is no essential contrariety; for poetry implies, not the rejection, but the use of philosophy. It includes, however, something which philosophy alone cannot reach; and that portion of it which it employs, it disguises by art. On this account, poetry is often, but without justice, deemed incompatible with philosophy.

A greater portion of unsophisticated enjoyment is produced by imagination, which many affect to despise, than by the discoveries of science, or the

facts of history. Where is the treatise, however correct or profound, that is read by the generality with so much pleasure as the *Deserted Village*? In estimating or devising means of happiness, imaginative delights should ever receive no inconsiderable prominence.

In matters of fiction, an active imagination renders you independent of the aid of painting, as well as of dramatic representation.

Reading a work of fancy to others, does not afford so much scope to imagination as the private perusal.

The influence of imagination on the common affairs of life, is greater than might be supposed. Naked reality would scarcely keep the world in motion.

In some instances imagination has so much the predominance, that when the objects of its desire are attained, they cease, by losing their proper character, and becoming realities, to afford pleasure.

A lively imagination tends to disqualify a person for narrowness of circumstances; yet the same cause begets impatience of the means which may be necessary to avoid the inconvenience.

When the mind is excluded from external pleasures, it is most apt to revel in those of imagination.

As, in the progress of nations, poetry is born before science, so it bids fair to outlive it; for the chief interest of science arising from the pursuit itself, when facts have been discovered they will be more or less slighted; while poetry, depending on the fugitive and ever-varying feelings of imagination, can never cease to retain a hold on the mind.

A beautiful landscape, sleeping calmly in the bosom of a lake, is like Reality as reflected in the mirror of the youthful fancy.

Imagination is one of the great nourishers of affection.

Many declaim against Fancy, who little dream that they are subject to its influence, only in its less refined and more sordid manifestations. Intellectual fancy, or fancy expatiating in the regions of mind, they despise; but unconsciously obey its power, when attaching an artificial lustre or value to some inferior object, or debasing pursuit.

The imaginations of some are so sensitive, or so open to the operation of melancholy, that reluctance is sometimes felt even to pluck a flower, because of the pain which may arise from beholding it wither and die.

In a newly-planted colony, or a nation of recent establishment, there is small power of association or genuine fancy; as in such cases, few materials exist for the exercise of these principles, which are in consequence too much depreciated. Antiquity and dimness supply the principal nutriment of imaginative feeling.

The reason why solitude nourishes fancy, is because it is deficient in matters of reality to feed the mind.

Imagination is the ruler of our dreams: let Reason be the ruler of our waking thoughts.

The influence of an active fancy on the practice of oratory, is perhaps on the whole unfavourable; for unless combined with considerable judgment and self-possession, it will be apt to exaggerate the difficulties of the subject, or to divide attention, by dwelling on the concomitants or remoter consequences of the effort.

PART VI.

ON AUTHORS, STYLE, AND LITERATURE.

THERE are only two cases in which authorship is justifiable ; when new ideas are communicated, or when ideas not original are expressed in a more concise or elegant form. Yet the majority of works are the offspring of indigence, vanity, or resentment.

The essence of most books might be reduced to the compass of a few pages. Leave out the trappings, the obvious truths, and the repetitions, and what will remain ?

Perhaps some of the finest thoughts and imaginations that the mind has produced, have never been communicated to the world. The best conceptions lose much of their excellence, when embodied in language.

One pernicious effect of amplification is, that it allows no opportunity for the mind to pursue a separate train of thought of its own. It is also

intolerably irksome to persons of vigorous and expanded intellect. In general, those authors are the most instructive, as well as most agreeable, who suggest only leading ideas, omitting subordinate remarks and illustrations.

What are called original thoughts, are often nothing more, in substance, than ideas which have passed through the minds of myriads before; though without being so firmly grasped, or so forcibly if at all expressed.

I question the maxim, that works of genius are characterised by a power of universally pleasing. This is improbable; for the minds, consequently the productions of some, are quite above the sphere of the multitude. That which would delight beings of understanding superior to men's, might fail to be comprehended or relished by human intellects of the first order. The generality are struck only with the most obvious beauties, and are utterly incapable of appreciating the higher kinds of merit.

The progress of style is an index of the progress of a nation. The most striking features of character and manners are transfused into composition.

There seems to be a greater separation than formerly between religion and literature. Not-

withstanding the numerous works of value in each department, there are few of modern production, with the excellences of both combined.

Political economy is an admirable subject to give precision and conciseness to style. It is chiefly in works of fancy and luxury that so much affectation and verbosity prevail.

It is a very inaccurate notion, that only poetry, or subjects of imagination, afford scope for the display of genius. Multitudes of works, in other departments, exhibit genius and mental excellence of the highest order.

There can be little doubt that nearly as many persons exist with qualifications to excel in the walks of genius or literature, who have never communicated their thoughts to the public, as those who have attained distinction in the capacity of authors.

Though no one can justly complain of a paucity of valuable works in our language, in any species of literature, yet to receive the highest pleasure and advantage which they are capable of imparting, an acquaintance with the productions of antiquity is requisite. The compositions of our best English writers are much impregnated with classical allusions, and with the style and imagery of the ancient models.

The progress of truth is not only impeded, but often supplanted for a time by that of error, in consequence of the precipitance and passion of men, and the multiplicity and haste with which works are now published. A genuine search after truth is a very quiet, unostentatious thing.

In the composition of their works, men of genius are perhaps impelled as much by a desire to disburden themselves of their thoughts, as by the love of fame.

Why is it that history is chiefly a record of cruelty and crime? Because it is badly written. All the more agreeable and placid scenes and events are passed over in silence.

There seems little advantage in the modern practice of reprinting the works of authors entire. Voluminous writers generally comprise much that is worthless; and since life is so short, and excellent books so numerous, only the best productions of the best authors should be presented to the public.

No work will be a lasting favourite with the people at large, which is not considerably tinctured with vernacular and idiomatic expressions.

Rules for composition are of very questionable utility, being apt to fetter the mind, and at best

only preserve from blemishes. All the directions that seem necessary for acquiring a good style; are, to read only the best authors; to select for memory their most expressive terms; to cultivate the taste in general; to compose frequently; and to revise with care.

The words of a language resemble the strings of a musical instrument, which yield only uninteresting tones when struck by an ordinary hand, but from which a skilful performer draws forth the soul of harmony, awakening and captivating the passions of the mind.

Except in the abstract sciences, few productions will live of which the principal interest is not founded on human passions, sentiments, or manners.

Merit may sometimes sigh at the unattainable excellence of superior minds, but Folly need never blush for want of examples in its favour.

The style of our elder writers is in general highly figurative and masculine, while that of most among the moderns, though smooth and accurate, is as destitute of expression as their character or manners. The progress of refinement has introduced the almost exclusive use of abstract terms, which, however desirable in metaphysical or argumentative composition

little adapted to those which appeal to the imagination or passions.

Let the controversy respecting the comparative merit of our elder and more recent authors, be decided by the circumstance, which few perhaps will be disposed to question, that the former display more attention to thought than to style; the latter, to style than to thought.

It is not the most impassioned parts of writing that live the longest in remembrance, but those which contain touches of humour, or striking delineations of character, scenery, or manners. There is something, indeed, more pleasing in pictures of quiet life, when drawn with fidelity, than in the most animated descriptions of passions or events. In any poet, the passages to which the mind reverts the most frequently, and with the greatest delight, are those which contain placid and agreeable images. Of this kind, for example, is the following night-scene from Tasso, in part imitated from Virgil and Homer :

‘ Era la notte, allor ch’ alto riposo
Han l’onde e i venti, e pareo muto il mondo.
Gli animai lassi, e quei che ’l mare ondoso,
O de’ liquidi laghi alberga il fondo,
E chi si giace in tana, o in mandra ascoso,
E i pinti augelli, nell’ obbligo profondo,
Sotto il silenzio de’ secreti orrori,
Sopian gli affanni, e raddolciano i cori.’

Gerusalemme Liberata, Canto ii. 96.

Written language is a tolerable medium for the conveyance of fact, but very inadequate in matters of passion, which often depend on something undefinable in looks, tone, or general demeanour.

If each individual were to contribute but one new idea, in any department of literature or science, the general stock of knowledge would be rapidly augmented. But most persons, not excepting those who have been tolerably educated, leave the world without having done so much.

In literary concerns, few things are done well that do not emanate spontaneously from the writer's mind. To act on the advice or views of others, is almost a certain presage of failure. If there is not genius to devise, there is seldom ability to execute.

There appears little reason to doubt, that the moderns possess incomparably more intellectual wealth in their own productions, than the whole range of antiquity can furnish.

Were not the practice occasionally useful, and almost necessary, the employment of words expressive of general subjects, as religion, theology, medicine, philosophy, had much better be avoided. It is often much less satisfactory to argue for certain positions as truths in particular depart-

ments or sciences, than as truths in themselves. Discussions should ever assume the shape, not of endeavours to support the tenets of a system or party, but of inquiries into fact.

Many of the ancients appear more original than they would be thought, if preceding and contemporary works were still extant. In like manner, various current ideas and metaphors are employed by some modern authors, who, in case the productions of other writers were to perish, might appear to posterity possessed of considerable originality.

The later we live in the history of the world, the more scope and materials there are for the exercise of genius.

Language is properly the servant of thought, but not unfrequently becomes its master. The conceptions of a feeble writer are greatly modified by his style. A man of vigorous powers makes his style bend to his conceptions.

There is an ancient adage, 'Learning is better than house or lands.' Whether the saying arose in times of comparative ignorance, when learning was rare, and therefore fetched its price, cannot now perhaps be determined. Certainly the maxim scarcely holds good in the present day, if it is to be — and as expressing the secular advantages

of erudition; for the world in general appears to entertain little veneration for mere scholarship. The high and the low are alike worshippers of mammon; nor do the learned themselves scruple to participate in the idolatry.

It can suit only a very limited or very elevated order of minds, to have the chief pleasures dependent on authorship.

A writer of talent, who intermeddles with subjects of a local or temporary nature, acts a part little characterised by wisdom. In the first place, he fetters his own powers, which might expatiate in the wide realms of intellect, instead of contracting themselves to some insignificant topic. Secondly, he invests the objects of his notice with unmerited importance, which he may ultimately feel to his cost. In the last place, he impairs his reputation with the public and with posterity, who cannot be supposed to enter into his personal feelings or circumstances. In literary affairs, as well as in the conduct of life, a most valuable prudential maxim is comprised in one word—Neglect.

The observation is sufficiently familiar, that men of genius are addicted to melancholy.* But

* The words of Cicero, quoting the authority of Aristotle, express the sentiment without qualification or exception: *Omnes ingeniosos melancholicos.*

it is perhaps somewhat more remarkable, that many of the most celebrated authors, whose writings in general are by no means tinctured with that disposition, appear to have felt, at seasons, a considerable portion of its influence. Who would imagine that Virgil, treating on such a subject as the rearing of cattle, would introduce the plaintive sentiment expressed in the following verses :

‘Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi
Prima fugit: subeunt morbi, tristisque senectus;
Et labor et duræ rapit inclementia mortis.’ *Georg.* iii. 66.

The muse of Shakspeare is supposed to have found its appropriate element and occupation amidst the scenes of comedy; yet some of his most beautiful passages are those which are pervaded by a melancholy tenderness. Even Horace, the Roman Anacreon, the merry votary of wine and pleasure, frequently blends with his most sportive strains notes of the deepest melancholy. If he celebrates the return of spring, he alludes to the shortness of its duration, and to that of life :

‘Vitæ summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam:
Jam te premet nox, fabulæque manes.’

Od. Lib. i. 4.

He dissuades from anxious pursuits and travels, because of the brief date assigned to mortals, and the intermixture of care with every condition :

‘Quid brevi fortes jaculamur ævo
Multa? quid terras alio calentes

Sole mutamus? patriæ quis exsul
 Se quoque fugit?
 Scandit æratas vitiosa naves
 Cura; nec turmas equitum relinquit,
 Ocyor cervis, et agente nimbos
 Ocyor Euro.' *Od. Lib. ii. 16.*

He meets with a disastrous accident, and takes occasion to moralize on the shortsighted views and the presumption of man:

'Quid quisque vitet, nunquam homini satis
 Cautum est, in horas.'———

Throughout the writings of this incomparable bard, his mirth and his philosophy, his pleasure and regret, go hand in hand; so that scenes and images in themselves the most agreeable, appear to have awakened in his mind some pensive reflections:

'Linquenda tellus, et domus, et placens
 Uxor; neque harum, quas colis, arborum
 Te, præter invisas cupressos,
 Ulla brevem dominum sequetur.' *Od. Lib. ii. 14.*

Such passages are by no means unpleasing, as they find an echo in every bosom.

Scenery and events are often more interesting in description than in reality. When actually witnessed, there is commonly an intermixture of some circumstance or feeling which diminishes the pleasure. But in reading a well-written account of them, no toils or privations are imposed; the essence of what is striking or agreeable

is extracted ; and the range of imagination is not bounded by fact.

History is chiefly interesting for the biographical notices, and the private incidents, which it embraces.

What are called parallel cases, are dangerous things in argumentation ; especially when pushed to excess, as they are liable to be.

The biography of almost any individual would be deeply interesting, if it fell into competent hands. The question is not so much, Who is the subject ? as, What are the qualifications of the writer ?

A writer, in order to be successful, must be more occupied with his subject, than with himself or his style.

The greatest poets, whether of ancient or modern times, have adopted or followed no particular profession. That of divinity has perhaps been more serviceable to the interests of literature in general, at least in its scholastic and more difficult branches, than all other professions together. This may have been owing partly to the larger number of those who have sustained the clerical office ; partly to the leisure which they are accustomed to enjoy ; partly also to the

comparative seclusion in which they pass their days : for where the mind is formed of good materials, solitude is calculated to generate deep and original thoughts.

It is a remark of Cicero, that there was no sentiment so absurd, that it had not been maintained by some of the ancient philosophers. However that may be, it would be difficult to find specimens of more absurd, and even puerile opinions, than are contained in the writings of the Christian Fathers.

Minds of superior rank are slow to express mere opinions, whether in censure or praise. If the matter in question be obviously meritorious, commendation is superfluous ; if otherwise, censure without reasons or argument, is unworthy.

It is not surprising that the mass of mankind, who are occupied with active pursuits, should be lost to every thing intellectual, when even the votaries of literature are apt to sink into supineness without excitement.

I would rather be the author of one original thought, than conqueror of a hundred battles. Yet moral excellence is so much superior to intellectual, that I ought to, esteem one virtue more valuable than a hundred original thoughts.

The omissions of some writers are more instructive than the remarks of others.

Our national literature appears to be verging towards the state, in which minute analysis, and subtle distinctions, take the place of bold and general ideas. In an intellectual respect, we have perhaps little reason to congratulate ourselves, when compared with our remote predecessors. In certain walks of genius, or branches of research; in essays, criticism, biography, epistolary and historical composition, and in general, in the lighter effusions of taste and literature, we may perhaps legitimately claim the pre-eminence. But in point of deep and varied learning; of pure, masculine, and expressive diction; of profound, vigorous, and comprehensive thought; of original and vivid imagery; it would be vain to search, among the existing generation of writers, for parallels to the great luminaries of former days. The race of lofty and gigantic minds seems to have vanished from the land. Where are our Bacons and Barrons? our Taylors, Howes, Cudworths, and Butlers?—Yet is the literary character of the present period by no means to be despised. In Sir Walter Scott we may boast the best novelist and miscellaneous writer that has ever appeared—a universal genius, whose productions alone would redeem the literary pretensions of the age from contempt. We have also a number of writers, in almost every department,

whose compositions display acuteness, versatility, elegance, and no mean compass of reflection. Nor is it denied that their works may be generally best adapted to the circumstances, and the mental demands, of the present generation. The topic under consideration, is not, however, a question of utility or adaptation, but of comparative intellectual merit.

It is in literature as in life ; the most laborious departments are often the least lucrative.

Our elder writers have struck out the statue ; the modern correct or polish the lineaments or drapery : which are the better artists ?

The principal advantage afforded to literature by fame in war or politics, is the opportunity which it furnishes for introducing notices respecting private life or character. On the interest which the celebrity has awakened, may be engrafted a large portion of amusement or instruction.

Profound mental inquiries are beneficial and ennobling to the individual, but scarcely touch the interests or happiness of society.

Exact analysis, whatever acuteness or ingenuity it may display, is not calculated to ensure its own immortality ; as we are apt to neglect what-

ever is reduced to its simplest and most elementary forms. Where no scope exists for difference of opinion, or additional investigation, the mind turns insensibly to subjects more or less complex and doubtful. But matters which relate to the feelings or imagination, can never lose their interest with the mind; because they are for the most part undefinable, and depend for their effect on individual association.

Genius is mostly connected with confidence in its own powers. But imbecility and ignorance frequently express a similar confidence. Are we therefore to conclude that in this case the feeling exists? By no means, or only in few instances; for its appearance is often assumed, merely as a disguise to that very feebleness of which there is a perfect consciousness.

Antiquity seems the more wise, because its follies have not descended to us. Inferior minds and productions abound in every period, but die their natural death. The present generation would no doubt appear very distinguished, if only the best works of the age were to reach posterity.

The satellites of genius are commonly of so indifferent a mould, that their own folly is reflected on their master, rather than his lustre reflected on them. This is one of the few cases

in which contrast, occasioned by juxta-position, is injurious to one party, without being at all serviceable to the other. In general it may be affirmed, that no real genius can play a secondary part, even with minds of a much superior quality.

Compilation is a task of far greater difficulty than the production of what is original. Yet there is no comparison between their intellectual merit, or their praise, whatever there may be as to their respective utility.

Without fame or adventitious recommendations, the errors or eccentricities of genius are the principal topics of criticism. When distinction has been obtained, not so much follies as merits are the subject of observation.

There is this circumstance deserving of notice respecting abstract, as well as practical truths in general, that they are capable of being separated from their authors, and transmitted or diffused through secondary channels. With most other kinds of mental production the case is different. A person cannot enrich himself with the ingredients of a piece of poetry or fiction, without perusing the composition itself. Works of taste and imagination are identified with the writer: works of science or philosophy, though possessing the highest merit, may soon incur neglect, because

the principles they contain are susceptible of conveyance in a multitude of other forms.

To a reflecting mind, few things are more obvious than the imperfections of biography. The principal events of the life may be narrated, but all the finer thoughts and feelings of the soul are necessarily omitted. This is the case, partly because the mental emotions are generally unknown to all but the person himself; partly because they vanish away so rapidly from his own remembrance; and partly because they are so complex and indefinite as to be incapable of adequate expression. Yet the history of the intellectual changes is the most important, and indeed the only proper history of the individual.

The delineations of life and manners are always the most interesting, which present faithful pictures of the subjects attempted, without including the less agreeable features.

A great mind, if tolerably exempt from ambition and vanity, is more disposed to entertain itself with the thoughts of others, than to collect or arrange its own lucubrations for the public.

A wise man extracts more benefit from an inferior work, than a fool from one of superlative merit.

It is singular, that while the poetry of Cowley and George Herbert is in general characterised by the most incongruous and puerile conceits, their prose compositions should be distinguished by so much amenity and grace. The prose of Herbert, in particular, has never been sufficiently appreciated for its chaste and unaffected simplicity.

Compression of style is the effect of compression of thought.

Philosophy abounds more than philosophers ; and learning, more than learned men.

A sentiment expressed in the form of an aphorism, communicates more pleasure, or more dislike, than when delivered in a different shape. If approved, its compression, and consequent separation from extraneous ideas, increase its force, and enhance the delight which it imparts. But if disapproved, its condensation only renders it the more disagreeable. Had the same sentiment been conveyed in a less concentrated manner, it would have been mingled with other ideas, some of which might have pleased. Or the very attempt to exhibit it in a favourable light, or to support it by arguments, would have diminished the offence, by the deference and compliment thus indirectly conceded to its opponents.

It is the practice of some to praise the old writers, but to read the modern.

Our language may be considered as having attained its summit of excellence; so that whatever change it may undergo will probably be for the worse. It has for some time been stationary, rather than progressive; and as far back as a century, or a century and a half, we may discover specimens of English style almost equal to that of the most finished productions which have subsequently appeared. The principal effect of the lapse of years, has been the diffusion of a good style, rather than the improvement of style itself. The diction of Dryden has been equalled, if not surpassed, by multitudes of writers who have flourished within the last century. Yet it was a strange notion of Horace Walpole, which appears to have been also the opinion of Johnson, that every body now-a-days employs a good style. A good style is much rarer than genius. The compositions of some, though very few, of our present authors, exhibit a union of almost every excellence; correctness, perspicuity, ease, vigour, and refinement. In general, also, decent and intelligible writing is a matter of ordinary occurrence.

The sculptor, who represented himself as not forming the statue, but only extricating it out of the block of marble, uttered nothing remarkably

sage. What should we think of the assertion, that a number of beautiful essays or poems existed in the English tongue, prior to the composition of a single literary work? Yet the assertion would be equally correct; for in writing a poem or essay, the author only joins artificially, not makes, the letters of the alphabet, or rather the words of the language.

If there are the dreams of the enthusiastic and vulgar, there are also the dreams of philosophers. Hume confidently anticipated the steady progress and ultimate triumph of his opinions; yet hitherto they have rather been on the decline.

Although to the immense advantages resulting from the present facilities for publication, is joined the evil of myriads of worthless productions, it is not the wise who suffer from the circumstance. They take effectual care to preserve themselves from the infection; and reap the benefit, while they escape the injury.

If the merit of books is to be determined by the test of new or vigorous ideas, there are few which deserve much attention.

Not so many errors are afloat in the decline of a nation's mind, as when the greatest originality and vigour prevail. In seasons which produce but few authors, we commonly find the best.

Ideas are bolder, but mistakes are numerous. In later and more refined periods, when writers are multiplied, superficial accuracy is generally diffused. Time naturally corrects and modifies opinions,

Few of our best writers have been noted for systematic study or habits.

We judge of the merits of style much more by the subject and the thoughts, than by the choice or collocation of the words.

To the products of genius, much more is contributed from within than from without.

It can scarcely be questioned, that even if Lord Bacon had never lived, or never composed his *Novum Organon*, the advancement of science and philosophy would have been certain and rapid. Some other master spirit would have supplied his place; or the general diffusion of facts and habits of investigation, consequent on the invention of printing, would speedily have demolished the ancient absurdities of opinion. No doubt the genius of Bacon accelerated the crisis.

Authority rules the literary and refined, as well as the vulgar. Where is the man who would not attach more weight to a sentiment emanating from *some acknowledged genius*, than to the same

sentiment expressed by a person without fame? Yet to what is this owing but to servility or indolence of mind, if reason, not circumstance, is the appropriate criterion of thought?

Collision of opinion among men eminent for genius or knowledge, has a tendency to keep the generality, who are swayed by other minds, in a decent and tolerably correct medium. Yet this tendency is seldom carried out, for most persons are fonder of extremes than of moderation.

It is usually more pleasing to see great truths presented in a combined form, than with a dissection of their constituent parts, or an analysis of their causes.

It is a favourable symptom in our national taste, that the pretended poetry of Donne, Cowley, and writers of a similar class, has long since sunk into oblivion.

If we are to credit the accounts which have come down to us of the ancient philosophers, several of them were no doubt literally insane. What other supposition can we form, when we read of Diogenes and his tub? or of Heraclitus retiring to the mountains, and living on grass? or of the methods he employed to recover the health which he had lost by his infatuation? *It is time that these personages should be divested*

of the title of philosophers, which nothing but ignorance, or a blind veneration for antiquity, could have conceded, and receive their appropriate appellation of enthusiasts or madmen. The annals of monachism could furnish no instances of more absurd conduct, than that which was exhibited by many of these pretended sages.

The views or pursuits of a person whose character has attained maturity, are rarely much influenced by the earlier parts of his history, which are not, therefore, deserving of particular notice in biographical narrations.

Competence of fortune, and a mind at ease, have in thousands of instances given the death-blow to literary ambition and success. Except in extraordinary cases, if a person feels himself happy in the elegances and enjoyments of private life, he will take small pains to obtain happiness from other channels.

We get the quintessence of men in books, the best of which are much more interesting and agreeable than their authors.

The charm of Swift's style consists rather in a perfect freedom from affectation, in perspicuity, and an easy flow of words, than in any remarkable vigour, elegance, or beauty. Its excellences are chiefly negative, but these are very numerous ;

and in composition, an assemblage of negative excellences argues no contemptible merit.

A secret in vigorous diction, is the employment of figurative terms and language in a blended or continuous form, in distinction from the employment of separate metaphors. Let the whole texture of the composition be imbued with imagery, instead of sprinkling a few detached similes over a generally meagre and barren style.

It is the minute things of life on which the feelings chiefly turn. The poem, therefore, or other species of literary production, which deals mostly with its generalities, will seldom affect the mind agreeably, or for a long period.

One of the most pleasing and valuable books of the kind in our language, is Herbert's "Country Parson." It deserves this encomium, not because it is of universal adaptation, as it was designed only for a particular order of ministers, and implies the existence of several customs which are now obsolete, and could not be revived with advantage; but because it combines the rare merits of simplicity, conciseness, depth, and originality. It displays incomparably more thought and genius than modern productions of a similar nature, which are generally mere compilations, abounding with minute details, and apparently as much calculated to perplex and encumber, as to afford any substantial assistance.

If prose were better written, poetry would be less in request. In several important respects, prose possesses a decided superiority over poetry. For the most part it is less difficult to comprehend; it is a better vehicle for conveying the precise sentiments of the writer; and is likewise susceptible of much greater variety

Might there not be a kind of intellectual dialect, to be confined of course to intellectual men, which should present little more than the leading ideas, in as few words as possible? In this case, would not the subject be more firmly grasped than when spread out into a wider space? and might not such a compression of sentiment and language be especially serviceable in argumentative composition, by keeping the mind fixed on the thought, without being diverted by the expression?

It is the province of mediocrity to remove common-place thought from ordinary apprehension, by parade of expression. It is the province of genius to bring down elevated thought to vulgar apprehension, by simplicity of expression.

Literature is in small request in times of war or civil commotion.

The poetry of Lord Byron contains no pleasing pictures of human life or manners; none of those

quiet, innocent, domestic scences, which shine so beautifully in the productions of Thomson, Goldsmith, and Cowper. He is not, nor is he likely ever to become, the poet of the people; as, with some exceptions, his writings would fail to be understood by an uneducated, or relished by an unthinking or unpolished mind. But neither is Homer, nor Sophocles, nor Milton himself, though surrounded with so much glory, the poet of the people. Byron, however, can fairly claim a much loftier title than that: he is the poet whom Genius, Taste, Feeling, will ever acknowledge as their distinguished favourite. His power is most conspicuous in the delineation of mental emotions; but these, as depicted by the pencil of the noble bard, are generally of an unusual order, either as to their causes or their intensity. Perhaps his most appropriate appellation would be that of the Poet of the Mind; for in describing its inmost thoughts and deepest passions, he has incomparably surpassed all his poetical contemporaries. The characteristic qualities of his compositions are evidently pathos, fire, and imagination, blended with the highest degree of elegance and refinement. To these pre-eminent merits, he has united the utmost poignancy of wit and satire; so as in the former to rival Butler, in the latter to excel Pope. On the whole, he may safely be pronounced the most vigorous and original poet that has appeared since the Author of Paradise Lost,

Perhaps we are mistaken in supposing that our ancestors, a century or two ago, were little accustomed to the practice of reading. If we take into account the difference of population, together with the larger size of most works then published, we shall perhaps be disposed to reverse the opinion, and conclude that the readers of books in former days were not only numerous, but certainly more indefatigable than the generality of readers in the present age. A great proportion of our older productions, though mostly elaborate and voluminous, passed through several editions. Few persons now-a-days read any thing besides newspapers, critical periodicals, and the lighter performances of literature.

As youth is the period for exaggeration, and susceptibility of external impressions, the opinions which persons of genius may at that season have formed, respecting the merit of works then in a meridian of popularity, are little deserving of regard. The contagion of admiration is then easily caught, and the feeling is often fondly retained through life.

Perhaps few sentiments would be more readily admitted, yet few appear to be less understood or practically regarded, than that of Plato—*Tὸ ἀληθὲς ἐν βραχεὶ κεῖσθαι*—"Truth lies in a small compass." If, as philosophers allege, scarcely any limits can be assigned to the compressibility

of matter, analogy might lead us to suppose, that the products or thoughts of the mind, though assuming so great a multiplicity of forms, are susceptible of indefinite condensation, or capable of being resolved into a few simple and elementary principles.

Our present dictionaries are of comparatively small utility. We require one purged from the multitude of words which are neither harmonious nor expressive, and rarely to be found in any classical writer; although their occurrence in the very best would be no sufficient reason for their adoption. Separate works might contain vocabularies or glossaries of antiquated terms and idioms. A considerable proportion of the authorities in Johnson, every man of taste and literature would at once refuse to acknowledge; while a number of appropriate words employed by many of our standard authors, especially by those who have appeared since the publication of the great lexicographer, are wanting in that and all similar compilations.

Criticisms on etymological points, and on the ancient significations of terms, are of trifling service in the application of language; and will no more contribute to form a master of style, than accurate acquaintance with the political constitution and usages of our remote ancestors, will make an able statesman of the present period.

It is a common fault with biographical writers, to describe the closing scenes of life with too great minuteness. The subject itself is generally mournful ; and the feelings then experienced, depend more frequently on disease than on character.

Some of the most cynical authors, as Swift, Boileau, and Byron, whose writings are tinctured with the bitterest satire against mankind, have enjoyed the largest portion of popularity. How is the circumstance to be reconciled with men's extravagant notions of their personal worth or importance ? Perhaps it may be, because each individual has too lofty an opinion of his own qualities to apply the satire to himself, but sufficient ill-nature, or taste for pleasantry, to admire it as applied to others.

Directions to genius, concerning the subjects or departments on which it should be employed, are generally misplaced. The mind is the most competent judge of its own powers and capabilities, and should therefore be left to follow the bias of its inclination. Perhaps there is not an instance on record, of splendid success in any province of genius or literature, where the writer has not acted from his own unfettered impulses.

There are multitudes of false maxims in Rochefort, perhaps, that he takes too dispa-

raging a view of human nature in general, but because, making no allowance for the operation of natural feeling or of fancy, he attributes almost every action to some specific motive, and every emotion to a selfish or unworthy origin.

In many instances, the best part of a man of genius goes down with him to his grave.

On the following points, erroneous and disparaging sentiments have perhaps been too prevalent: 1. The literary, if not religious obligations due to the Catholics: 2. The mental utility of the metaphysical speculations of the schoolmen: 3. The degree of intelligence and civilization of the middle ages. With regard to the last of these subjects in particular, we meet with numerous incidental notices, decisively opposed to the general opinion respecting those times; during the greater part of which, we are to remember, the art of printing was unknown; a circumstance that will account for the oblivion into which many things may have fallen, indicative of no very contemptible state of understanding or manners.

Of ten thousand reflections which pass through the mind, perhaps scarcely one is deserving of record. Even in a professed treatise or dissertation, it is rare to find more than two or three prominent ideas, which may be considered as the

basis of the production, and to which the other parts are only subordinate. In most instances those ideas might be comprised in a remarkably brief space; but to give them a certain form, they are generally mixed up with much connecting or extraneous matter, are elucidated and expanded, supported by arguments, protected against objections, or compared with collateral topics, so that out of few sentiments as at first presented to the mind, a book is at length elaborated.

The effusions of genius are entitled to admiration rather than applause, as they are chiefly the effect of natural endowment, and sometimes appear to be almost involuntary.

The prose compositions of antiquity are in general characterised by vigour of thought, simplicity of style, and modesty of argumentation; qualities which appear in striking contrast to the flippant and decisive tone assumed by some modern pretenders to criticism and philosophy.

Books scarcely answer their legitimate end, when appropriated to the ephemeral contests or passions of mankind. One of the most delightful effects of literature, is to beguile the imagination from the passing scenes of life, and replenish the mind with abstract subjects or contemplations.

Historical are much less exceptionable than fictitious misrepresentations of character or opinions. The mere narration of facts does not much operate on feeling. Besides, fact is of tangible nature, and is easily confronted with fact. But the case is different when satire, imagination, incident, and the countless variety of influences which romance is capable of exerting, are enlisted on the side of prejudice or falsehood.

In several of the remoter parts of our island, at the present time, we meet with vestiges of our language as it probably obtained several centuries ago; that is, we may notice certain terms, or terms employed in certain significations, which are not to be found elsewhere, except in some of our ancient writers, or in glossaries. The circumstance is curious, as illustrating the uniformity of ideas, and the comparative seclusion which must have prevailed in those districts. It is observable, that native and idiomatic phraseology ever survives the longest among the lower classes of the community.

It is possible for subjects to receive too much illumination, as a landscape commonly appears less beautiful or attractive amidst the full brightness of day, than when seen through a thin veil of mist, or by the mellow light of the moon. The intricacies of fiction are generally more inte-

resting than their developement, and mysteries than their solution. Were the obscure parts of a story to be left without explanation, the impression of the piece would frequently be heightened. Perhaps the powerful effect of several of Lord Byron's pieces is attributable, in considerable degree, to the obscurity in which he has chosen to envelope his principal characters and incidents.

It might be desirable, could the fancy be realised, to collect, in some concise and definite form, the substance of what may be regarded as undoubted knowledge; omitting, of course, all extraneous or obscure points, and illustrations. Let this repertory constitute the standard of mental attainments; and any additions which the stock of science may progressively receive, be incorporated with the collection. In this manner would be formed a kind of general text-book of education; and the accumulated knowledge of preceding ages being acquired from this source, the attention might be directed to the unexplored or unconquered regions of inquiry.—It would then be discovered, how little information mankind in reality possess, notwithstanding the lapse of so many generations! and, consequently, how small a portion of truth is essential to the interests or happiness of life! The field of study would also be greatly circumscribed, and the number of authors and publications materially diminished.

The pleasure of composition, and that of communicating ideas in discourse, may be viewed as substantially the same; namely, that which arises from releasing the mind of its contents. Accordingly, the delight is experienced even when there is no intention or expectation of benefiting others, although the prospect of that effect may considerably enhance the gratification.

If a person were not acquainted with the commercial and scientific character of the English nation, he might form a pretty correct opinion of the fact, from the use of certain metaphors and phraseology observable in the ordinary dialect of our country. The language of current writers and speakers, and even of our Parliamentary debates, begins to be strongly tinged with the technical peculiarities of science, commerce, and the arts.

There are several compositions of modern origin, in little esteem among our literary antiquaries, but which display a force and variety of thought, that would quite enrapture them, if expressed in quaint phraseology, and believed to have been produced two or three centuries ago.

As the ear may be a nice discerner of sounds, although the voice may not be sufficiently flexible to preserve a correct modulation; so in literary and other affairs, the judgment and taste may be

pre-eminent, while the powers of execution are of an inferior description.

Correct mediocrity will succeed better with the public at large, than the most distinguished merit, combined with some conspicuous foibles or mistakes. Witness Bentham in politics and legislation ; in poetry, Coleridge and Wordsworth.

The productions which breathe a spirit of melancholy, often obtain the strongest hold on the mind, because the tone accords most with man's conscious feelings of misery.

The ability of a book to communicate pleasure, depends more on the ideas which are brought to its perusal, than on those which it furnishes.

Fictitious compositions, when properly managed, may be rendered the vehicle of the most interesting parts of general literature ; as, descriptions of character, usages, and manners, antiquities and tradition, the leading features of history, scenery, opinions, &c. Biography may include, with much collateral information, many of the popular discoveries in science, as well as the principal maxims of domestic economy. Besides poetry, there would then remain only one great branch of literature ; namely, that comprised in essays or dissertations, comprehending, of course, criticism, and philosophical dis-

cussion. This method of blending fact with fiction, and mingling together a considerable variety of subjects, appears preferable to the usual mode of exhibiting topics in a separate and meagre form. Our modern literature partakes, more than is necessary, of the principle of the division of labour; which, however proper in attempts to establish or enlarge the boundaries of any particular department, seems little desirable for the purpose of communicating ascertained information.

It would be useless to seek in the productions of the ancient philosophers and moralists, for a parallel to the depth, acuteness, and comprehensive range of reflection, which characterise the writings of Lord Bacon. Most of the illustrations and arguments employed by the sages of antiquity, are taken from the simplest objects, or most familiar occupations, and indicate a state of society little advanced in the career of refinement; in which circumstances, profound and discriminating observations on nature or manners are rarely produced.

The civilization and intelligence of the English nation, are greatly owing to the decencies, and the species of literature, diffused by means of the sabbath and its observances, which operate in a powerful, though silent and imperceptible manner, like the dew on the sunshine.

The Bible is unquestionably the richest repository of thought and imagery, and the best model of pure style, that our language can boast. It would be difficult to discover in its pages a single instance of affected or tumid phraseology. Yet its very simplicity, and unostentatious character, are attributes which render it distasteful, in a literary point of view, to sophisticated and pretending minds.

No poet or descriptive writer has ever had the images or scenes which he has endeavoured to portray, conveyed to the mind of another exactly as they appeared to his own. The pictures have varied according to the peculiar conceptions and associations of each individual, and received a new form or colouring from every imagination to which they have successively been presented.

Grammarians commonly object to the blending of different metaphors; but in certain cases, it contributes essentially to vigour and beauty of style.

The ancient Greek tragedy was in some respects, perhaps, more adapted to its appropriate ends of pity and terror, than the efforts of the tragic music among the moderns. In the former case, the calamities portrayed were generally referred to the sole appointment of destiny or the

gods. This circumstance would naturally produce in the spectators an undefinable impression of sublimity, arising from the obscure and impenetrable nature of the doom; and consequently could not fail to create the emotions of terror and awe. At the same time, the innocence and the helpless condition of the unfortunate victim, were suited to excite the tenderest feelings of sympathy and compassion.—It is true that with us the result would be different, because we are happily free from the superstitious and erroneous sentiments on which the ancient tragedy was grounded; but then we are to consider what would have been the probable case with those who yielded a firm assent to the doctrines of their fabulous theology. The ancient tragedy, therefore, was perhaps more powerful in its effect; that of the moderns, in which the catastrophe is brought about by the workings of passion, and the agency of men, is more just and instructive. The former was built on superstition and fancy; the latter is founded on nature and morality.

Books are now employed for too great a variety of purposes. There are many things in the departments of science and literature, which might be much better acquired by other means.

PART VII.

ON SOCIETY, GOVERNMENT, AND POLITICS.

IF I were to select a person the most competent to give an opinion on any great national question, it would not be a man officially engaged in the administration of the state. He is too much occupied with his own department, or with local and personal considerations, to form views otherwise than circumscribed and partial. It should be the individual who combines the philosopher with the man of the world; who looks on life as from a distant eminence, witnessing the movements and aspects of men and events, without feeling their influence.

The boundaries between civilized and savage life are much narrower than certain philosophers and theorists would have us to suppose. The greater part of the people in cultivated states, appear to be much on an equality with the most advanced of those nations that are commonly regarded as barbarous. A considerable number, situated in remote districts, receive scarcely the

slightest tincture of the passing improvement. In respect to sense and ingenuity, multitudes among savage tribes equal, if not surpass, our peasantry; and are probably considered as belonging to an inferior race, merely because their language and manners, and perhaps their colour, differ from our own.

We may doubt whether it is more consolatory or more mortifying, that no individual is of much consequence in the system of society.

It would scarcely be correct to affirm, that modern times do not produce so many specimens of physical hardihood and strength as remoter periods, although we have many more persons of feeble constitutions. Owing to improvements in medical science and modes of life, thousands are now reared who would have sunk under the rigorous circumstances of former days.

The epochs in which intellect flourishes most, are not always those of the greatest public happiness. In England, for example, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may perhaps be viewed as the seasons most distinguished for the vigour and luxuriance of the national mind. Yet the political aspect of those periods was marked by despotism on the one hand, and commotion on the other; while the paucity of comforts among the people at large, suggests little in favour of their social condition.

There is no dearth of genius among the ordinary mass of society, as appears in times of great political commotion, when a multitude of superior minds are generally developed, that otherwise might have slumbered in obscurity, or died in embryo.

With several disadvantages arising from separation between the higher and lower classes, there is at least one benefit; their respective vices and follies are less known to each other. Perhaps this circumstance may illustrate the fact, that the most violent opponents of popular claims have frequently been persons who have themselves risen from the body of the people.

A frequent cause why the state of things in preceding times is praised to the disparagement of the present, is only a contracted unphilosophical spirit, which is open to passing circumstances or annoyances, but incapable of estimating any thing remote. The disadvantages of the present age are considered great, because they are felt; those of former periods are overlooked or depreciated, because they are past.

It may be questioned whether any of the military exploits of antiquity equal, in point of skill, the celebrated ones of modern times. Most of the famous battles of the Greeks, for instance, were fought with effeminate people, or with

undisciplined barbarians. Military tactics appear to have been very superficially understood by the ancients.

A public step, though it may have originated in partial or cursory views, is often decisive of subsequent conduct, through a regard to consistency. It is necessary, therefore, to deliberate well, before this last and governing direction be given to the course of action.

It is a rare thing for the leaders of parties, however mild or equitable themselves, to discover the assumption or injustice of their adherents, towards persons of opposite sentiments.

Perhaps it is doubtful whether the invention of fire arms has increased the destruction of human life. Mind bears the sway, and would shortly obtain the supremacy under any other system or discovery.

It is a relief, in perusing the accounts of the wars and devastations by which different countries have at various periods been afflicted, to recollect that, in general, only the surface of society is touched by any great national or political events,

Some persons are willing enough to look at both sides of a question, within certain precincts; but once touch their own sentiments or party, and their seeming impartiality vanishes.

The unsettled state of some public questions is a cause of regret, chiefly as an obstacle to the consideration of more important ones.

In estimating the comparative evil of one oppressing many, or many oppressing one, we are to take into account the influence of tyranny on the mind by which it is exercised. This consideration might lead us to suppose, that in the latter case there is a preponderance of evil; for the indulgence of wrong dispositions is more to be deprecated than the sacrifice of personal rights or comforts. On the other hand, it would be unfair to overlook the pernicious effects which oppression generally produces on the moral feelings and character of the oppressed.

We are arrived at that state of society and the arts, in which there is so great a disproportion between the necessities and the luxuries of life, that the former are very dear, and the latter very cheap.

Men of comprehensive and vigorous minds are often more vehement in reprobating erroneous or foolish measures than to others seems necessary. The fact is, they have a deeper insight into the absurdity and possible ill consequences of what they oppose, than the generality dream of.

It would be easy to draw such a picture of the laws and institutions of almost any country, as,

without including a single circumstance decidedly incorrect, might induce a person unacquainted with the actual particulars of the case, to suppose, that scarcely any grievance or misery existed among the community. The suppression of some facts, and a certain arrangement or colouring in the exhibition of others, may have all the effects of positive falsehood in misleading the judgment.

We have scarcely any instances of permanent republics founded on monarchies, but many instances of permanent monarchies founded on republics. A republican form of government seems most agreeable to a rising and frugal nation; a monarchical one, to a nation which is wealthy and luxurious.

Caprice, fancy, and passion, bear the principal sway in the affairs of nations, as well as of individuals.

The redress of abuses is a benefit to the public, but seldom to the author. To pursue the course of a reformer, is to make oneself a martyr to other people's convenience.

In a civilized state, the laws and judicature decide on men's actions. It may be doubted whether the consequent neglect of appeal to individual feeling, may not have rendered the moral perceptions less acute and active.

Some of the worst offences are those which law cannot reach.

Affairs, whose success depends on the multitude, can seldom be left purely to their own merits.

There is only one description of men that know the vanity of titles and distinctions ; not in general those who are accustomed to them, but such as possess superiority of lights.

All systems and institutions, whether civil or ecclesiastical, which are incapable of moving along with the tide of general improvement, will sooner or later be swept away by its progress. The alleged infallibility and unchangeableness of the Catholic church, constitutes the principle of its destruction. Many of its leading tenets and observances were framed for times of barbarous ignorance, and can never bear the test of advancing civilization and knowledge.

The chief qualification of a great statesman is not minute accuracy, but general expansion of views ; a state of mind equally removed from headstrong precipitance, and from tardy vacillation.

One generation is so linked with another, that great political or ecclesiastical reformations are

always accomplished slowly. The taint of national prejudice, like the colour of the darker tribes who have intermarried with the white, is effectually removed only after transmission through several generations.

Some of the worst systems in theory, are combined with many advantages in practice; and some of the best systems theoretically, are connected with considerable practical evils. Men modify systems, more than systems influence men.

However just or honourable it may appear to acknowledge the merits or influence of your opponents, it is almost certain to impair the strength of your own cause. The public in general have so little faith in the mutual candour of parties, that a confession, on one side, of the other's superiority, is readily admitted, and almost amounts to an intimation to adopt its interests; for who wishes to range himself with an inferior party?

By long familiarity, men become so attached to the existing order of things, that any alteration, however in the end advantageous, has almost the effect of tearing away the fibres of the heart. It may reconcile us to some of the evils attendant on political revolutions, to know, that with the subversion of several things truly

valuable, is generally connected the overthrow of many vain idols of the mind.

One of the firmest supports of princes and statesmen is the general distribution of moderate wealth, and the multiplication of domestic comforts among the members of the community.

It is more easy for a minister of state to retain his office in times when he has to grapple with momentous or difficult affairs, than amidst the uniformity of common and tranquil events. The reasons are, partly because the affairs themselves are apt to fill the mind of the public, more than the manner of their execution ; partly because if splendid, he receives a portion of their lustre by reflection ; if disastrous, their magnitude and difficulty suggest grounds of apology, as well as diminish the desirableness of occupying his sphere.

The effect of titles and external badges of distinction, is to amuse the vulgar ; but wise men grasp after the substance, and despise the shadow.

It is generally minds of an inferior, though active character, that are chiefly concerned in great political changes. Genius, so well fitted, we should imagine, to control the tide of events, and regulate the stormy passions of men, dwells in a calmer and loftier sphere, and is mostly a passive spectator of public commotions.

The main labours of men should ever be for times of tranquillity, as these form the rule, and seasons of disturbance or war the exception.

Dependence is mostly in vain, where the union of many, for a considerable period, is required.

The abolition or the establishment of different systems, is often decided by their appendages rather than their merits.

The military, though so often the dependence of princes, have generally been the chief instruments in their deposition or overthrow. Witness the revolutions effected in the times of the Roman emperors, by the prætorian guards ; the subversion of the English monarchy and constitution under Cromwell ; and the events connected with the French revolution of 1789.

Were it not for the prevalence of false maxims, the practice of war would be reckoned one of the most monstrous and unnatural things in the world.

The separation of men into distinct parties, which seems an effect of the exercise of judgment, is more frequently occasioned by aversion to that exercise. It is much easier to adopt the opinions of any particular body in the gross, than to think for oneself, or to select truth out of different bodies.

It is impatience of repose, and of the monotony of life, that furnishes the elements of success to the enterprising and ambitious.

The effect of political party resembles that of the division of labour; the merits and defects of a measure being more fully developed in consequence of different minds directing attention to the one or the other, than if all were equally occupied with the consideration of both.

Great national changes and revolutions are accomplished principally by those who reside in the capital, or at the seat of government. The mass of the population are in most cases passive or indifferent.

He is little qualified to rule the minds or the affairs of men, who, on every slight difficulty or opposition, is so pusillanimous or resentful as to abandon the reins.

It is usual to ascribe gradual and imperceptible changes to Time; but this is only another name for a variety of complex or unknown causes.

The science of government, and the principles of rational freedom, have perhaps made greater progress within the last two centuries, than during *all preceding ages*.

The efforts of governments, as well as of individuals, often counteract and neutralize each other. At the present time, our legislature is drawing in two opposite directions. By promoting emigration, it acknowledges and attempts to remedy the evil of a superabundant population; yet by continuing the existing system of poor laws, it sanctions the most effectual means of increasing that population.

Few circumstances are more likely to bring on a political crisis, than alarming representations of its approach.

In the estimation of a wise man, the single judgment of a superior mind, on any question of state policy, would possess more weight than the determination of the largest and most able deliberative assembly. No one who adverts to the general decisions of Parliament, during the last century or century and a half,—undoubtedly the brightest period in its annals,—or who reflects on the inaccurate and absurd notions frequently expressed by many of its members, can entertain extraordinary reverence for its opinions. Though the British Parliament is perhaps the first legislative body in the world, in point of rank, talents, and opulence, it generally combines, with its more sterling qualities, a large admixture of *inferior elements*. The consequence is, that in

abundant instances its wisdom is overpowered by its folly.

There is much less expenditure of life in naval than in land battles. The humanity as well as policy of Britain, therefore, dictates the importance of directing her chief energies to the maintenance of the strength and superiority of her wooden walls, which are at once her bulwark and her glory.

It requires only two or three wise heads in certain situations, that is, the principal thrones of Europe, to preserve the greater part of the world in a state of constant tranquillity.

A government conducted by a single individual would invariably be most efficient, if his possession of talent and integrity could be ensured. The consultations of an assembly embarrass and weaken. Yet a distribution of the legislative functions into the hands of many, is ever the most desirable; for what is lost in promptitude and vigour, is gained in security and public satisfaction.

The best practical statesmen are not, perhaps, those who have the most accurate or extensive political knowledge, but such as possess that particular kind or portion of it, which is best accommodated to the capacity and circumstances in which they happen to live.

Public reformati^ons are sure to arrive, sooner or later; but who can estimate or atone for the countless sufferings occasioned by their delay? or answer for their effectual operation after they have been so long denied? It is too late to repair the house when crumbling into ruins.

Were the wisest systems of polity, national or domestic, to be established, they would only be of brief duration: changes would inevitably arise, because mankind are changeable; and their restlessness alone will ever ensure an abundance of innovations. Are we therefore to lament, because the mutations incident to mortal things, attend also laws and public institutions? Only in this respect, that men appear more disposed to encroach on what is good, than what is evil. Abuses and follies are allowed to continue long without molestation; while arrangements adapted for beneficial purposes are soon displaced or impaired.

The French nation was perhaps as far advanced in general refinement of manners and language, in the age of Louis XIV. as the English at the present period. In matters of external polish, we have ever been considerably behind our neighbours. Perhaps the tardiness of our progress has been owing, in great degree, to our insular situation.

The opponents of national or political innovations, are commonly those who are equally adverse

to alteration in the state and sentiments of their own minds. A person will hardly dread the thought of exterior or public change, whose ideas in general are undergoing a process of incessant change or augmentation. Yet this is certainly the case with every thinking or disciplined mind ; for what is intellectual advancement but a series of intellectual innovations ? It is natural that they whose understandings are stationary, should wish politics to be so ; and in consequence, deprecate all attempts at progression or improvement.

Men are naturally mechanical and stationary. Without some external impulse, they will move on in the same monotonous manner, and continue to occupy the local sphere to which they have been habituated. The numerous emigrations therefore which occur, together with the smaller but frequent changes of residence, connexions, and modes of life, indicate some disruption in the native feelings of our countrymen.

One cause of political party is the ideal connexion with distinguished characters or events, by which the multitude of subordinate adherents beguile their imagination. They who possess no personal importance, and who have no method of communicating notoriety or effect to their individual sentiments, may in a sense attain all by proxy ; for the adoption of a certain system of politics, gives them an imaginary identity with

its most eminent partizans, and a kind of participation in their success or glory.

There never need be apprehension of a deficiency of talent to carry on the affairs of nations or communities ; for either those affairs will require but ordinary abilities, or the circumstances which require, will also create a superiority of talent, the supply of which is generally regulated by the demand.

The remains of political prejudice ever linger the longest in remote towns and villages, where the possession of only a moderate degree of intelligence, and a prevalent system of dependence and exclusion, are apt to nourish sentiments of servility on the one hand, and of assumption on the other.

Mankind appear to be in league against their own interests, and betray the same spirit in matters of secular concern as in those of religion. Let a wiser and better course of things be exhibited ever so clearly, or enforced with the utmost cogency, no practical alteration is admitted, or only after repeated struggles against its adoption. The battle with error or apathy must be fought again and again ; and often those who make the most strenuous efforts in the cause, never live to witness its triumph, or reap the fruit of their exertions.

PART VIII.

ON YOUTH AND OLD AGE.

THE reason why old persons remember and recite youthful scenes or events, appears resolvable, in good degree, into the dependence of memory on attention. We attend most, for instance, where there is the greatest inducement or pleasure. In youth, pleasure is particularly felt, the faculties or capacities of enjoyment being then strong and susceptible. In old age, sensibility is considerable impaired; less pleasure is therefore experienced, and less attention is exercised; consequently, there is a fainter recollection of recent circumstances. Besides, we are perhaps so constituted as to remember pleasing things more than painful. Accordingly, the aged seldom dilate on the disagreeable incidents or feelings of their earlier days.

Time appears long or short, according to the multiplicity or paucity of ideas that pass through the mind.* One cause, therefore, why persons

* See, in the ninety-fourth number of the Spectator, a beautiful oriental fable illustrative of this point.

advanced in life concur in admitting its extreme brevity, is because they possess but few ideas respecting the circumstances of their past existence: it is only the more prominent facts in their history that memory has retained. The sentiment may be illustrated by the case of a traveller looking back on the extent of territory which he has passed in his journey: the distance appears short, because many valleys and other intervening spaces are out of sight.

It seems unadvisable to attempt composition in early life, as the mind is then almost wholly unfurnished with thought, as well as language; and, not possessing the requisite materials for composing, would only waste in the effort the time and attention which had better be occupied with surrounding objects, or other sources of information.

In youth, the thoughts are directed principally to the future; in old age, to the past. Of the former circumstance, a deficiency of experience is the cause; of the latter, an excess: in the one case, ignorance of the future predominates; in the other, a growing insipidity of the present.

Old age may deride or censure the buoyancy and thoughtless indifference of youth; yet there is more actual enjoyment connected with its careless levity, than can be acquired by all the prudential and calculating policy of riper years.

The glow and artlessness of early feeling are so ill compensated by knowledge, that many would give all their mental attainments and superiority, to possess once more the unsuspecting confidence of childhood, and its facility of being pleased.

Premature developement of the intellectual faculties is generally succeeded by melancholy ; in part, because healthful exercises and pastimes are in such cases often neglected ; in part, because excitement and activity of mind oppress the bodily frame, at a time, especially, when its growth requires mental quietude and repose ; in part, likewise, because novelty in the acquisition of ideas, so fertile a source of pleasure, is sooner exhausted.

The sensitive regard of the youthful mind to the opinions and tastes of others, is soon abated or destroyed by a more intimate acquaintance with men, which shows the folly of the grounds on which their predilections and antipathies are frequently founded.

The worldly wise and cynical are as mistaken in denying, as they are sometimes unfeeling in laughing to scorn, generous emotions in the youthful bosom.

Deep feeling is the companion of taciturnity. *In the spring-tide of passion, youth is sparing of*

words, but absorbed in emotion. Afterwards, when the day-dreams of love are vanished, words take their place.

Youth possesses the vigour and fancy requisite for successful mental effort, but is mostly deficient in the necessary judgment. Old age possesses the judgment, without the impulse or the fire.

Deficiency of generous sentiment in old age, may be owing as much to decline of feeling in general, as to intercourse with the world.

The aged frequently appear inferior, in an intellectual point of view, to the youthful race; yet that appearance is usually fallacious. It is true, age has dropped several trappings, makes fewer attempts to please, and is less rapid in the flow or the expression of ideas; but the main stamina of mind and attainments, in any particular generation, are commonly equal to those of the subsequent one. The leaves and blossoms are gone—it is winter—but the trunk and branches remain.

To the juvenile fancy, man and his affairs appear vastly important; but as the powers expand, and the world becomes better known, that importance seems wonderfully diminished.

Few suppose, at least in their own case, that *as life advances*, understanding and sense may

decline. Yet it is certain that with many, an increase of years brings only an increase of folly.

Pride and impetuosity in youth, announce peevishness and discontent in old age.

Youth abounds in friendships, as the trees put forth leaves in the spring. But the year glides along, and the trees shed their foliage : life also passes on, and man lays aside his friendships.

It is difficult, in mature age, even to conceive the depth of imagination and feeling which often prevail in the more early periods of life.

Comforts parting from old age, are like the leaves falling from a tree in autumn : they will never return.

There are several reasons why entrance on active life should commence at an earlier period than is customary : First, because of the shortness of life. Were our years like those of the antediluvians, the delay might well be prolonged till the age of thirty or forty ; but by that time, alas ! the best portion of our life is consumed.—In the next place, there are energies and capabilities in the young, which should not remain dormant or unappropriated. For certain purposes of utility, better qualified than riper age.—In the

third place, though failures or defects may sometimes accompany juvenile efforts, sufficient allowance will generally be made for them by candid minds: indulgence and good-will are almost universally conceded to the young. Besides, the evil need not be of frequent occurrence, if those placed in immediate connexion were to afford the benefit of their friendly suggestions.—But perhaps the most important consideration, is the desirableness of avoiding the formation of opinions and habits too foreign to general feeling; a disadvantage almost inseparable from having the character and sentiments moulded in a sphere of comparative inactivity and seclusion. As it is, we are perhaps too dilatory in all our movements. We begin to live when we should rather be learning to die; and the greater part of our days are spent in preparations for happiness, which never arrives, or only when too late. At the age of twenty-four, Pitt was prime minister of England; and Augustus, when only twenty, was consul of the Roman republic, and in effect almost master of the world.

PART IX.

ON FAME.

THE portion of fame which would intoxicate a vulgar mind, imparts little gratification to the true genius, whose views ever extend beyond reality, and who, by the very mental elevation which has won celebrity, discovers the insignificance of the acquisition.

They who are most desirous of posthumous fame, are generally persons of strong imagination, which pictures the effect of living throughout subsequent ages, and combines present feelings and circumstances with future reputation. But it requires small discernment to perceive, that all this is pure illusion, and that, in reality, posthumous renown is not worth a feather.

The maxim received from antiquity, and often quoted in modern times, that fame resembles the shadow, which retires when pursued, but follows when shunned, is rarely supported by facts. If a man chooses to let fame alone, fame will be very content to let him alone.—A pretty metaphor
! often give currency to falsehood.

He who would live for future generations, must have his thoughts occupied, but his hands and his time free. He must be content to remain ignorant of many things which fill the ideas and conversation of the generality; to be neglected, perhaps, or misrepresented, by his contemporaries; and to behold the superficial and flippant reap the distinctions which are the appropriate reward of merit.

The greater part of mankind are no more remembered after death, than the leaves and flowers of preceding summers.

The insignificance of fame is shown by the fact, that it often depends on the most trivial or accidental circumstances; and that probably as many persons who deserve and might acquire it, die without its attainment, as those who share the distinction.

No one who has a knowledge of man, can feel much anxiety about his applause.

There is something mysterious, as well as melancholy, in the circumstance so beautifully illustrated by Gray;

“ Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

Yet the mystery may in part be solved by the reflection, that minds which in this world have never been disclosed, or have manifested themselves only in the bud, will no doubt be developed in a future state.

It seems destined that they who shall have a life in subsequent times, shall not experience much of the comfort of this life. If we turn to our greatest geniuses, whether poets, warriors, statesmen, or philosophers, we shall find that, in general, they were more or less corroded with melancholy, or wasted with disappointment. It may be questioned whether many an obscure peasant, who is forgotten as soon as dead, has not more enjoyment crowded into the brief span of life, than is usually allotted to those whose celebrity is immortal.

Some of the best and ablest men the world has produced, have lived in obscurity, and been scarcely mentioned after death.

The fame of oratory soon dies, unless sustained by the reputation of written works.

Local esteem is far more conducive to comfort than general reputation.

It requires more heroism for a person of enterprising mind to die in obscurity, than amidst the

excitements of battle, or in any situation which attracts admiration or sympathy.

Fame, whether contemporary or posthumous, is a phantom, and is not valued for any positive benefits which it yields, but because it flatters the imagination. The desire of posthumous, is therefore nearly as rational as the desire of present celebrity; since it is only Fancy that creates the wish, and since the object is substantially as advantageous in the one case as the other.

After upwards of two thousand years, Epicurus has been exonerated from the reproach, that the doctrines of his philosophy recommended the pleasures of sensuality and voluptuousness as the chief good. Calumny may rest on genius a considerable part of a world's duration:—what then is the value of fame?

A person of limited mind, being incapable of forming a comprehensive view of things, especially in their remote tendencies, judges of them, in the main, by their present appearances or effects. His attention, accordingly, is occupied chiefly with local or passing objects and circumstances, on the interest of which he perhaps endeavours to build a reputation for himself; not considering that fame, derived from temporary causes, is often indeed the most rapid in its growth, but ever the most transient in its duration.

In the case of most persons, oblivion follows death as surely, though sometimes as imperceptibly, as the twilight and darkness succeed the day. Others have a kind of glimmering of fame through the night of ages, as when the moon or stars shed their light. But the dawn is approaching, when none will be any longer wrapped in obscurity.

It might not be amiss if a similar custom existed among ourselves, to that which was practised by the ancient Greeks, who, on certain occasions, called over the names of their deceased ancestors, for the purpose of keeping them in remembrance.—A sacred regard to the memory of the dead is also stated to prevail among the Indian tribes of North America, who are described as visiting the tombs of their forefathers who have been buried more than a century.* The circumstance is remarkable, as exhibiting a correspondence of feeling in the opposite state of civilization to that of the Greeks.

* See a note to the second part of Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming*.

PART X.

ON RICHES AND POVERTY.

ON surveying from an eminence an extensive landscape, I sometimes think within myself what slight reason there is to covet possessions in the wide world ; how small a portion of it is held by the most wealthy ; and how little even of that small portion is actually enjoyed by its owner. In almost any condition, we may appropriate to ourselves as much of the world's goods as will be beneficial, and practically almost as much as any one can. The finest prospects, scents, air, and the gratification of real wants, are cheap to all.

There is a general tendency in man's life to accumulation. Were life more protracted, the evils which frequently attend this circumstance, would of course increase in proportion.

I wish to be master of my possessions, not my possessions to be master of me.

Poverty and dependence have their train of vices, fully as numerous, perhaps, as those of

opulence. The following are some of the principal : selfishness, acquired or fostered by the habit of receiving without imparting ; dishonesty, hypocrisy and adulation, improvidence and extravagance, or a disposition to seize present enjoyment, without reference to the future, from an idea of the impossibility of sinking much lower ; and from these causes combined, a general laxity of conduct.

If you happen to be wealthy, you need not much fear the encroachments or impositions of the dishonest, as redress is at your command. But if you happen to be poor, the only preservative is to avoid coming in contact with that class of character.

It is difficult to see why a reasonable man, possessed of a competence, should not be as much gratified with having houses or lands in picture, as in reality.

Good blood is worth a fortune.

The poorest are generally the least economical. Persons seldom become frugal till they begin to accumulate.

Perhaps as much pleasure is felt in the practice of economy, as in that of profuse expenditure.

Were we to consider the goods of life as temporary loans, which they are, rather than appropriate or permanent possessions, which they are not, we should be more likely to make a proper use of them.

Among the instances of compensation in the system of life, we may remark that the feeble, whether in body or mind, often possess affluence, having nothing else for their support. The vigorous and the intellectual are frequently poor, but they less need the assistance of riches.

Mankind would not be so eager in the pursuit of riches, were it not for deficiency of right feeling among their fellow-men. The motive to accumulation is generally exemption from wrong, disrespect, or unkindness, rather than any accession of positive enjoyment.

Impatience is a great foe to economy.

Poverty and hardship are admirable preparatives for the enjoyment of opulence and prosperity. If so, we can scarcely accord with the poet's description of a happy life, when he mentions among its ingredients, *res non parva labore, sed relictæ*.

If, as some have represented, leisure is the principal advantage conferred by riches, many

who are poor already possess that advantage. To what purpose then the toilsome pursuits to which multitudes doom themselves?

The comparatively small share of direct influence or of wealth allotted to mind in the general arrangements of life, will not appear surprising if we reflect, that moral worth has still less of these external accompaniments than mental.

It is a rare thing for avarice to prevail in the extremes of great opulence or great poverty; but in all the intermediate gradations, it can flourish without difficulty.

For the most part men are pressed with poverty, and thus excluded from many gratifications; or if possessed of riches, are prevented from enjoying them by ill-health, passionate or envious temper, or some other misfortune.

Poverty is despised by few so much as by the poor.

Lost objects of affection often live longer in the feelings of the poor than of the rich. The former have few other objects or pleasures to fill the void; the latter, a great number and variety.

Avarice seldom abounds in the ruder stages of poverty; but when luxuries have begun to mul-

tively, a desire is created for money as the means of their attainment. Afterwards, a desire for money as an instrument of purchasing pleasures, frequently degenerates into a passion for accumulation itself; the end being supplanted by the means, in consequence of the influence of habit.

More wisdom is necessary to use than to acquire riches.

Poverty delights to revel in ideal scenes of wealth and splendour. On the other hand, affluence and distinction delight in the contemplation of the simpler and more obscure walks of life. In each situation, the mind feels its own barrenness of pleasure; and therefore turns from real dissatisfaction in what is known, to fancied happiness in what is unknown.

If, according to the opinion of Socrates, and to the natural signification of the term, only those things can be denominated the goods of a man, which are instruments of his benefit, how few are the goods even of the most affluent! and what a disproportion subsists between the possessions and the goods of the generality of mankind.

PART XI.

ON MISCELLANEOUS POINTS IN MORALS.

WHEN duty and pleasure are incompatible, we are to regard the former, however slight, in opposition to the latter, however considerable.

Respect yourself if you wish others to respect you.

Any particular virtue is strengthened by the improvement of the general character.

There is so much injustice and selfishness in the world, that it would be one of the most extraordinary things imaginable, were we to experience none of their effects.

It is a beautiful trait in Virgil, where Æneas, about to revenge himself on Helen, is reminded of the duties which he owes to his parent, wife, &c.* The best way to conquer the suggestions of improper feeling is to attend to the obligations of present duty.

* See Æneid, Lib. ii. 567—603.

Prejudice should invariably be treated with lenity, unless connected with intolerance or bad temper; for man, constituted as he is, almost inevitably becomes prejudiced under certain external circumstances.

It would be interesting to trace the process by which a mind, naturally unsuspecting and generous, becomes decidedly selfish and suspicious, through contact with selfishness and unkindness,

Propensities to vice often run counter to each other, as avarice and vanity, or avarice and the love of pleasure. This is never the case with virtuous principles or dispositions. The more excellences a man possesses, the more vigorous and harmonious is their operation.

Supposing temper depends chiefly on physical causes, which there is perhaps reason to believe, this furnishes no apology for a bad temper, because the mind is not thus deprived of a power of self-control; and because, with those who are subject to the failing, the chief point of probation may be, whether they will counteract their tendency to its indulgence.

Affliction is often an excellent casuist.

Some minds are so humble and diffident, as almost to admit the representations of falsehood and calumny against themselves.

No passion carries with it more of its own punishment than pride.

Amiability is not blindness to faults, but candour and benignity towards them. This is compatible with decided aversion. If we resent, or treat with the utmost rigour of justice, undoubted faults, we shall be very unamiable.

In disapprobation of the vices and follies of others, we are more influenced by selfishness than we may suppose. Improprieties of conduct excite little regret, unless our own interest or consequence is affected.

Consider rather the slight aggregate of evils which you suffer, than the individuals or circumstances by which they are occasioned.

Complaints seldom exceed suffering; for it would be idle to suppose, that he who felt himself happy, should be querulous. It does not, however, follow, that complaints are justifiable; for suffering is always inferior to desert.

In opposing evil, you will be most likely to succeed in your own case; for you have more control over yourself than over others.

Time will almost infallibly give you the advantage over calumny or ill-treatment, but the

remedy is too slow ; and therefore the best method is to obtain a present conquest, by superiority of sense and feeling.

The mind is soon tutored by experience in the truth, that even in acts which bear the appearance of kindness, people are frequently governed merely by interested considerations. The discovery may wound a person of sensibility ; but his character is little disciplined or matured, unless he is prepared to pursue his own course of integrity, without much regard to the circumstance.

To receive wrong, is sometimes a more dangerous test of moral principle, than an opportunity of doing wrong.

Without suffering, man is apt to be a very proud being, and with suffering, a very discontented being.

On reviewing life we may perhaps find, that while pleasurable things have produced little beneficial effect on the character, painful ones have rendered us wiser or better.

There is scarcely any thing, however wrong, for which, when agreeable, we are not able to adduce some plausible reason.

Do you pride yourself on your honesty? Have you ever been poor?

When overtaken with the night of adversity, remember, that though the sun shines not on thee, he is shining on myriads of other creatures of God.

The separation of ethics from theology and Scripture, has ever been vain and pernicious.

We need only be brought into contact with men in cases where their duty, apart from their secular interest, is concerned, to be convinced of their immersion in folly and vice.

How many are there, who die before attaining what to them appears the chief end of life ! but how many more, alas, who die, without having attained the true end !

In attempts at self-vindication, people sometimes argue, not so much to convince others, as to reason down the suggestions of their own conscience.

There is an inexhaustible fund of truths in nature, which are discovered only in a gradual manner, during the lapse of ages. The slow progress of arts and inventions may be considered as intended to counteract the depravity of mankind, by keeping research and ingenuity awake, and thus affording occupation for those, who would otherwise be left to the baneful effects of inactivity and indolence.

There is scarcely humility, there may be kindness, or there may be vanity, in familiarity towards those who are evidently inferior.

When disposed to exercise severity on thine enemy, remember that he, as well as thyself, will shortly be laid in the grave, and mingle with the dust; and let every spark of resentment die within thee.

Persons sometimes appear to have pride; but it is rather hypocrisy. In reality, they are quite sensible of their own deficiencies; but wish to create the belief that themselves, at least, entertain a favourable opinion of their own merits.

There is generally some portion of sterling excellence in those, who are proud and unbending in adversity.

Most persons, when censured, omit to inquire whether the reproof is just. The fact that they are censured, is sufficient to awaken their dislike and animosity.

Some vices, when brought into connexion, neutralize each other's force. Were it not for this counteracting influence of different vices in the same subject, or of the vices of one person brought into collision with those of another, the state of society would be incalculably more deplorable.

People seldom pay much regard to their own behaviour, when they have little to hope for from others, in the shape either of positive benefit or of approbation. The loss therefore of outward comforts or possessions, is often the removal of so many restraints on misconduct. The case would be different if men were influenced by proper motives; but the external morality of the world is mainly owing to politic or selfish considerations.

Excessive eulogy, however agreeable to the mind, seldom enhances regard for the encomiast's discrimination or honesty; because most persons secretly feel, that they possess only slender claims to commendation.

Men will often barter truth and sincerity for the slightest considerations; merely for the gratification of an inquisitive spirit, or the attainment of a trifling degree of deference. Nothing is more common than the utterance of flattery on those points, concerning which some confession has been made; as if with a view to recompense the confidential acknowledgment.

An interesting circumstance is presented, in the contrast of stern intellect with the amiable affections. There are numerous occasions on which the latter appear incalculably superior and *more commanding*.

Where there is nobleness and generosity of disposition, intellect is sooner conquered by affection than by argument.

To an ingenuous mind, it is more painful to entertain unfounded suspicions, than to suffer the disappointment of unmerited confidence.

Many are open to the influence of kindness, who are impervious to argumentation. It is one of the regrets of philosophy, that feeling and sense, not reason or justice, govern the world.

To pursue a line of conduct which is dignified, and indicative of self-respect, and to abstain from uncharitable surmises amidst neglect and unkindness, is almost above the reach of humanity.

If mind depends chiefly on the structure and dimensions of the brain, it follows that there is no more warrant for pride on account of intellectual, than of corporeal superiority.

A disadvantage frequently connected with sterling merit of character, is proportionate impatience of the vacillation or faults of others. To be indulgent to the defects and follies of men, is much easier for those who have only mediocrity of worth, than for those whose excellence is pre-eminent.

Conquer thyself, and thou wilt conquer fame, fortune, the privations of poverty, the malice of thine enemies, and the bitterness of death.

It is frequently politic to entertain distrust of others, but seldom wise to express that distrust.

We sometimes meet with the remark, that such an action or enterprise could have been justified only by success. The sentiment is incorrect. All that we have to govern us, in any particular case, is a preponderance of reasons at the time. If we act contrary to that preponderance, success is no justification; if in accordance with it, failure is no discredit.

Does your imagination dwell on the wrongs which you suppose you have received? Perhaps it may be as well to inquire, whether there are none that you inflict.

We are prone, not only to overlook, but to disesteem good qualities, when found in the persons of those whom we dislike.

The possession of knowledge is less likely to foster vanity, than the possession of riches. A man may abundantly increase his fund of ideas, yet have very little to show for his pains. Knowledge is apt to nourish pride rather than vanity; vanity rather than pride.

For the mind to be rightly disposed, and rightly informed, is all that is requisite to ensure proper conduct. Yet of the two qualifications, the former will carry a person much farther in the right path than the latter.

They who have learned the necessity of patience, candour, and impartiality, in the pursuit of truth, will be most likely to display these qualities in the ordinary concerns of life. The most unfair, hasty, and pertinacious men, are generally such as have been least disciplined by education.

There seems to be a kind of moral sense in brutes, though more conspicuous in some than others. If there is reason to suppose that they possess a species or degree of mind, their existence in a future state may not be improbable. This presumption would not ill accord with the hypothesis of a moral sense, and with the fact of their sufferings in the present life.

To spend time in controlling passion, or in rectifying principle, is far better than in accumulating ideas.

Were we obliged to make a right use of the things which we possess, we should wish for a diminution of them rather than an increase.

I can hardly believe that a person who is unfair in argumentation, will be honest in practical affairs, under circumstances of temptation.

Perhaps in most instances, men are as much the objects of pity as of censure.

As, in the operations of nature, many similar effects result from different causes ; so, in the course of life, many actions and modes of conduct that are alike, originate in different and even contrary passions or principles.

A great portion of the benefits which man receives, are conveyed through the medium of his fellow man. The design may be to promote a spirit of mutual kindness, justice, and moderation. Had angels been the sole or principal instruments of communicating good to mankind, the ties of reciprocal attachment among the members of the human family would have been much more feeble. Perhaps the happiness of heaven, though arising immediately from God himself, may be imparted chiefly through the agency of its inhabitants.

Many who have adopted a certain course from the impulse of their own inclinations, endeavour to find a good motive for it afterwards.

A spirit of impatience is strengthened by the ratification of its wishes.

Frequent and periodical control of any improper disposition, might in time lead to its extinction. Hence one great moral advantage of the sabbath.

There are numerous fragments of life, which, so far as action or enjoyment is concerned, might be subtracted without injury. Yet these very seasons may afford peculiar scope for the cultivation of patience, which is often more important than either action or enjoyment.

If we reject the doctrine of innate ideas, it is difficult to discover with what propriety we can maintain that of innate passions or propensities; as, for instance, the love of power, or the desire of riches. Besides, are we not able to account for the production of these feelings or principles, by the influence of external causes, just as we consider the ideas in general which the mind possesses, as the result of acquisition?

Were it not for our familiarity with death, we should consider it one of the most unnatural things in the world.

Though we may have no opportunity, in the present life, of profiting by the lessons of experience, it is possible they may not be without advantage to us in the future state of existence.

The great end pursued is decisive of the character ; yet the end may be wrong, while many subordinate parts of the conduct, leading to that end, are right.

If we could look into the minds of men, we should perhaps discover, even in those whom we account the most vicious, a freedom from some faults which we may be ready to impute to them ; a mixture of something good with many of their real blemishes ; and perhaps a few excellences unalloyed with any debasing quality.

Before indulging ardent desires for any object, let us ask ourselves whether we are prepared to see it marred, which is possible, or altogether reft from us, which sooner or later is certain.

The suspicious, in particular, should guard against solitude, and unrestricted thought ; otherwise they will be liable to indulge a train of reflections adapted to nourish their peculiar temperament ; that is, they will magnify the real or imaginary failings of others, and by the activity of the mind, under the influence of self-love, discover abundant means of justifying themselves, even though in error.

The truly humble seldom utter any thing in their own disparagement. They who express much of themselves, are rarely to be credited.

It is desirable, for the sake of comfort, to keep on good terms with others ; but far more so, to keep on good terms with ourselves.

The rarity of friendship is evinced by the circumstance, that there are few persons before whom the politic and reflecting would utter follies ; and by the fact, that on the occurrence of a breach between any, some allusion is generally made to prior infirmities or foibles—an evidence that those imperfections must have been noticed, and treasured up at the time.

Let your censure of others be arrested or qualified by the reflection, that possibly the faults which you reprobate are the matter of their own regret.

Many vices, which are secondary in the order of their existence, are first in point of magnitude and infamy. Selfishness, which is so rarely condemned, perhaps because it is so common, is the parent of almost every vice.

Man is in one sense a machine, moved by the hand of the artist. In another sense, he is a perfectly free agent. We all, for instance, obey laws imposed upon us by nature, and which we should not otherwise have known ; yet in doing so, we are entirely voluntary.

There was little benevolence, whatever pleasantry, in Momus censuring Vulcan for not having placed, in the breast of the human form which he had made, a window to disclose the thoughts and movements of the soul. Could such a fiction be realized, men would probably despise each other much more than they do ; because, whatever unexpected excellences they might discover, they would seldom perceive, in their nearest associates, a large portion of regard to themselves.

In point of benefit, whatever may be the case in point of comfort, the proximity of a critical or uncandid acquaintance is sometimes not undesirable, as it may constitute one motive, among others more powerful, to pursue a circumspect and upright career.

The best way of rendering moral truths effective with men in general, is not to attempt a logical demonstration of them, or to exhibit their abstract reasons or proprieties ; but to impress them on the mind by striking illustration, and to appeal more frequently to the heart than the head.

If we choose to discompose ourselves at every instance of folly or deficient principle that we happen to encounter, the mind will be kept in a state of constant irritation. It is the part of a man, while sensible of the improprieties of

others, and anxious for their correction, to preserve so much equanimity, that they may not detract from his happiness, his good temper, his usefulness, or his mental progress.

We have made little advancement in philosophy, to say nothing of fortitude arising from higher motives, till we have learned to bear neglect.

Pride is often increased by abstaining from the investigation of difficult topics. When the attention is withheld from subjects which require close or diversified reflection, no mental infirmity or incompetence is discovered, and self-complacency is therefore easily indulged.

Little honour is reflected on virtue, when her dictates are performed with cold precision, unmingled with grace or with kindly feeling. Rectitude without courtesy, is sometimes less agreeable than error or vice with courtesy.

Why is it that of all kinds of tedious things, common-place maxims in morality are the most tedious? Perhaps because every one knows, and few care to practise them.

A thorough miser must possess considerable strength of character, to bear the self-denial imposed by his penuriousness. Equal sacrifices, endured voluntarily in a better cause, would make a saint or a martyr.

They who can resort to obsequiousness and flattery, have commonly little or no principle.

The ancient codes of philosophy were too refined and intellectual for the mass of mankind, and exerted scarcely the smallest influence on the morals of society. It is only the Christian system which unites what is contemplative, with that which is practical, and sufficiently intelligible.

It is unwarrantable to assert, that a belief in the immortality of the soul is essential to correctness of conduct, however beneficial, in a moral point of view, that belief undoubtedly is. The lives of several of the ancient philosophers, among others of Epicurus, who denied or questioned the doctrine, furnish a decisive confutation of the sentiment.

Let man bewail his ignorance as he pleases, there are many things which he certainly knows. He has incomparably more intelligence than power; and, in moral cases, his information always surpasses his performances.

Contemptuous views of mankind easily degenerate into aggressions on their rights or happiness, and are rarely combined with vigorous or persevering efforts for their melioration. The bitterest cynics have ever been selfish in their disposition, and not unfrequently immoral in their conduct.

Some always feel most disposed to pursue a magnanimous or disinterested course, when destitute of the means or opportunity; but all their generous sentiments appear to vanish, when an occasion for their exercise is conjoined with the ability.

If we look at mankind as they are, we shall perhaps regard exemption from positive faults as no trivial merit. But if we consider what they ought to be, that merit will appear very insignificant. The mixture of several minor blemishes, with a number of eminent virtues or attainments, seems preferable to mere negative worth.

How much more pleasing do the qualities and actions even of a friend appear, if his course is attended with success, than with disappointment! and how much more favourably do we think of ourselves in prosperity than in adversity!

What is taken for patience, is sometimes only brokenness of heart and despondency.

There is no greater enemy to virtue than despair.

The efforts of any individual to reform or benefit mankind, are only as a drop of water to the ocean.

If no actions were to be performed but those which originate in proper motives, life would be almost reduced to a state of inactivity.

All error, as well as all vice, is the offspring of imperfect views.

Patriotism implies a higher tone of feeling than the exercise of the domestic affections. The latter are mostly the product of nature; the former is the result of principle or expansive benevolence.

The miseries of life are a prolific source of its vices. Mankind would not be near so depraved, if they were much more happy.

He must possess a very contracted understanding, or a very callous heart, who is rigorous in censuring mankind for their ordinary errors, which are perhaps as much the effects of suffering as of depravity. Let us remember that they have the burden of mortality to sustain; that the generality are doomed to struggle for the bare means of subsistence, and to meet with ten thousand difficulties and vexations. And shall a fellow-worm be prompt to denounce condemnation on the race, because, amidst the multitude of hardships which they endure, they sometimes go astray, or manifest a considerable portion of secularity?

One reason why adversity is borne with tolerable ease, is, because persons are apt to sink in self-estimation in proportion to their sufferings. It would be almost impossible for some to sustain

the accumulation of trials which befall them, if their proud feelings of confidence and superiority continued in full operation, in the season of their misfortunes.

The vices of men appear to be changed, rather than eradicated or essentially diminished, by the progress of civilization and refinement.

PART XII.

ON SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH RELIGION.

It is fabled of the celestial divinities, who are said to have resided on earth during the golden age, that they forsook the world, and fled to heaven, in consequence of men's vices. But the Scriptures reveal God as coming down from heaven to earth, in order to save the race of man, and that, too, at a time when their wickedness was at its highest pitch.

The eye is naturally delighted with beautiful prospects or objects. So the believer is delighted with the simple contemplation of God's attributes, which are to the eye of faith, precisely what beautiful objects are to the natural eye. Hence the Christian, so long as he retains his distinctive character, would be happy in the sole perception of God's excellences, without receiving from him any positive communications.

As Christ was to be an example, as well as a *viour*, it was necessary that he should appear

in a station of life suited to the condition of all men. Had he appeared in the capacity of a potentate, or in some other distinguished rank, the majority of mankind would never have regarded him as a model of conduct; because sovereigns are generally deemed so elevated, that the idea of imitation or resemblance is not entertained by the mass of the people. But Christ, by moving in an ordinary sphere, displayed those excellences which are needed by all, and adapted to the circumstances of all.

The enlightened men of antiquity differed from some modern ones in this remarkable particular, that they revered, instead of vilifying, the prevalent systems of religion. Though the sect of Cynic philosophers may be regarded as an exception, yet their ridicule of the pagan religion was only occasional, in common with their censure of almost every thing else. In what manner, then, do we account for this circumstance? Was the ancient system of belief or worship more rational, or more deserving of veneration, than the Christian? This will hardly be pretended. Were the philosophers of antiquity less acute in the detection of absurdities? It is equally incredible. The explanation seems to be, that the Christian religion is of a purer nature, and more *severe morality*, on which account chiefly it is *hated and opposed*.

In the present state of being, those things by which man is most ennobled, are the least generally bestowed. Air, light, food, are enjoyed by all. The distinctions of intellect are allotted with a more sparing hand; those of grace, with still stricter limitation. What a happy circumstance would it be, if the most valuable gifts of heaven were as common as the meanest! if grace were as universal as the light!

With respect to earthly blessings, we generally desire them in vain, or the possession of them is not combined with a relish. Desires for spiritual things are followed by possession, and possession is connected with appreciation and enjoyment.

Worldly goods, by long familiarity, are apt to become insipid. The longer we are experimentally acquainted with spiritual objects, the more is their value discerned, and the more productive are they of happiness.

According to Jewish writers, miracles had ceased for a considerable period before the incarnation of Christ. Was not this in order that the miracles which he performed might be the more illustrious, as the stars disappear some time before the rising of the sun, and thus add to his splendour?

A strong motive to fortitude is presented in the example of Christ, whom nothing less than the

concealment of his Father's love was able to move. It was then that he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

In that which may be regarded as the chief good to man, the following qualities must unite. It must be, 1. Intellectual; otherwise the pleasure which it affords will not be of a nature superior to that of the brutes. 2. Attainable by all, of whatever age, sex, or mental conformation. 3. Unimpaired by distribution. 4. Independent on the circumstance of time or place. 5. Incapable of being possessed to excess. 6. Composed of essentially the same elements as the good to be enjoyed in a future state. All these requisites are found in communion with God.

We can hardly conceive a more pitiable case, than that of a man unfit for this world, and disgusted with its wrongs and follies, yet destitute of preparation and relish for another.

It is necessary to look on the world as from some higher region, in order to form a correct opinion of the movements and the vanity of man. But without the light of Revelation, the mystery of mortal scenes can never be unravelled. We hear some, for instance, deploring the insufficiency of talent or wealth to impart happiness: some expressing dissatisfaction amidst a profusion of earthly pleasures; while others

inveigh against the selfishness, follies, and crimes of their fellow-creatures. The Christian only is adequate to the solution of the problem. He is taught in the Bible the sinfulness of man, and his need of a Saviour.

As the stomach, when healthy, is able to convert almost any kind of food into nourishment; and as the intellect, when healthy, acquires vigour from every object of its attention; so is the case in religion. A very pious mind will extract nutrition from an inferior system of means and advantages.

When the Christian has to bear neglect or affronts, let him remember that they are nothing compared with those which God sustains every moment.

It is sometimes remarked, that singular mercies follow severe afflictions. One cause of the feeling may be, that the mind is softened by the previous calamity, so that a higher estimation is formed of common benefits. We should consider our daily and most ordinary blessings as unspeakably great, if our hearts were but in a proper frame.

When I reflect on the feebleness of man, the vanity of his thoughts and purposes, the short
life, the vice that seems interwoven
and the misery which overspreads

the earth ; and when I recollect, that successive generations exhibit only the same specimens of frivolity, crime, and wretchedness ;—I am almost tempted to conclude, that the world has been created in vain, and turn from the prospect with despondency and dread. But when I consider that there are some verdant spots amidst this scene of barrenness and sorrow ; that myriads of immortal beings have participated, and will participate, the benefits of Christ's redemption ; and that, in all circumstances, the perfections of God will be displayed and glorified ; I rejoice in the whole of the divine administration, persuaded that it will ultimately secure the noblest and most delightful results.

In a worldly sense, it is well for men to consider, not what they have, but what they are ; in a religious sense, not simply what they are, but what they have, or may have, in Christ.

God seldom removes the punishment of any sin, till its bitterness has been felt.

It is an evidence of man's apostacy from God, and of his abject condition, that the limitation of desires is a paramount duty, and should be one of the principal objects proposed by education.

To feel enthusiasm in any earthly cause, much must be borrowed from imagination. In the

concerns of the soul, imagination is always surpassed by reality.

At the creation, the gifts of heaven preceded and anticipated man's wants. The supply now follows slowly, and in most cases, after repeated and laborious efforts. Revelation was not communicated at once, but in successive portions.

There are two striking proofs of human depravity or feebleness. One is, that God has not left either the propagation of the species, or the preservation of life, to a sense of right and wrong, but to the influence of implanted feelings or appetites. The other is, that the most erroneous and pernicious forms of religion, as idolatry and Mahometanism, have attained more success, and exercised a wider control over mankind, than the religion whose origin is divine.

The small progress of men, under the best religious instructions, need excite the surprise of no one who recollects the ignorance and mistakes of the apostles, under the teachings of our Saviour.

They who most deserve the blessings of this life, commonly set the least value upon them, and are best prepared to leave them.

If religion in any case produces sorrow, it is a
with inexpressible joy. But if it

produced little else than sorrow, that circumstance would furnish no legitimate argument against its truth; because, for aught that appears, there may be sufficient reason in our own circumstances, or those of our fellow-creatures, for melancholy reflection; and also, because it is better to mourn now, than to be in torments hereafter.

Few things administer pleasure apart from association, or unless invested by fancy with adventitious charms; a circumstance which demonstrates the vanity of our present state, and the necessity of having the principal desires centered on God.

There is a deeper source of men's vices and improprieties, than parties or systems.

In seasons when we cannot gaze on the sun, because of the brightness of his beams, we may behold the delightful effects of his influence, in the lustre and beauty of creation. It is thus in reference to God, who dwells in the inaccessible light, but diffuses the rays of his benignity and love on a boundless variety of objects.

The sophistry is very superficial, which represents mankind as not responsible for their belief, because that, it is alleged, is dependent on reason, not on the will; just as if the degree of attention, and other circumstances which influence the operations of the reason, were not affected by the moral qualities of the mind.

To hate sin, yet to compassionate the sinner ; to pursue the affairs of life with diligence, yet in subordination to the interests of the soul ; and to attend assiduously on the exercises of religion, without being satisfied in the absence of that grace which they are designed to convey ; are three eminent attainments, to which every Christian should earnestly aspire.

We form a kind of friendship with surrounding scenes, and with the objects of our possession ; but frequent separation from them, and introduction to new ones, though not the most pleasing circumstance, may not be unproductive of advantage, as suggesting the mutability of earthly things, and the permanence of the state to which we are hastening.

To be obsequious to man, yet insulting to God, is one of the commonest things in the world.

A regard to man is intermingled with most actions, and gives, in fact, movement to the world. A regard solely to God is rarely to be found, and never but in the true Christian.

There are two remarkable ways in which God sometimes punishes sin: First, when he prevents the gratification of those desires, which, being cherished to excess, have been the principal occasion of sin. Secondly, when he permits the

gratification of the desires, but annexes to it some circumstance, which operates as a sting and a bitterness to the soul.

An excess of what is visible and ceremonial in religion, is adapted to man considered rather as the subject of senses than of reason. The absence or paucity of external rites, is adapted to man considered rather as the subject of intellect than of senses. Neither of these arrangements is accommodated to the actual constitution of man, who is a creature of reason and intellect, as well as of senses, passions, and imagination.

The universe is replete with things apparently inexplicable. We may every where discover traces of the divine hand, yet that circumstance rather increases than diminishes the mystery. An endless profusion of plants and flowers, displaying the most exquisite structure and beauty, flourish and decay without ever being noticed by the eye of man. Myriads of insects, on whose formation and appearance wisdom and taste appear to have lavished their resources, are born but to expire. The majority of human beings die in a state of infancy; and, consequently, before they can have answered any of the purposes of probation. Of those who arrive at maturity, the greater part are destitute of Revelation; and most of those who participate the privilege, die without repentance, or preparation for a future existence.

The infallible truth of Scripture absolves from the necessity of caution and selection in the admission of its statements, which are therefore accommodated to persons of the weakest understanding; while its sublime, diversified, and interesting facts and discoveries, afford exercise to powers the most vigorous and capacious.

In the adaptation of the word of God to intellects of all dimensions, it resembles the natural light, which is equally suited to the eye of the minutest insect, and to the extended vision of man.

Christianity is certainly opposed to the sentiment, *Odi profanum vulgus*; and will never obtain general ascendancy in the world, till that sentiment be overcome. But it can achieve the conquest, only by infusing a spirit of patience with folly, ignorance, prejudice, and perverseness.

Think not, O man! too basely of thyself, for thy body is the workmanship of God; thy soul is immortal; and for thee, Christ has become incarnate. But let not pride have a seat in thy breast, for thy body is destined to the grave; thy soul is contaminated with sin; and the incarnation of Christ on thy behalf, shows that thou art ruined and miserable without the interposition of his mercy.

One obstruction to the Christian's pleasure, is a limited range of thought on religious subjects.

As the mind has a natural predilection for variety, why should the feeling be denied indulgence in sacred matters alone? especially since the Scriptures contain an infinite range of topics for the notice of the contemplative?

The spectacle of so much depravity among mankind, encourages the hypocrite in his sins; but the same circumstance confirms the sincere Christian in his principles, and renders him more afraid of sinning.

It would be no slight service to the cause of Christianity, to trace the influence of experimental religion on intellectual character and habits.

The whole system of life seems to indicate, that the present state is subordinate and introductory to another. Man has sufficient enjoyment to make life desirable, but not enough to render it happy. His circumstances are adapted to the ends of probation, not to those of reward. His hope is intermingled with fear, his joy with sorrow, his best efforts with imperfection. The paucity of his days affords opportunity for few distinguished achievements; while the longest and most prosperous life, is only vanity and a shadow.

Next to immorality, nothing is so odious as contraction of mind and prejudice. But of all

kinds of mental contraction, that which is sometimes associated with religion, is the least excusable, and most hateful.

I wish to familiarize to myself the idea of death, as producing no essential alteration in the elements of character, but only a change in the mode and sphere of the soul's operations.

The object of prayer is, not that God may become acquainted with our wants, but that, by thinking and speaking of them in his presence, we may feel sensible of them ourselves, and of our dependence on him for their removal.

External assists internal religion.

Mental sins are almost the only temptations to which some persons are particularly exposed.

Religious joy is seldom so great in those who have been gradually converted, as in those who have been reclaimed from a course of profligacy. In the former case, experience supplies a less vivid apprehension of the miseries connected with a state of irreligion; and speculative familiarity with scriptural truth having perhaps existed beforehand, there is less of the pleasure occasioned by surprise and novelty.

To interpret the literal parts of Scripture allegorically, and the prophetic or figurative parts

literally, indicates the same quality of mind ; namely, dissatisfaction with simple truth, and a predilection for the marvellous and imaginary.

The religion of the present times, viewed in connexion with that which prevailed two or three centuries ago, may be compared to the learning of the respective periods. Both piety and knowledge are now much more extensively diffused ; but both are in general much less profound.

Death, one of the most ordinary events in the world, answers several of the most important purposes. In the first place, it allows scope for the multiplication of souls, and thus contributes to replenish the universe of mind. Supposing the number of the human race were stationary, and all the habitable portions of the earth fully peopled, how small would be the aggregate of beings under such an arrangement, compared with the actual amount in successive generations. If we estimate the population of the globe at eight hundred millions, and assign to each generation, on the average, about thirty or forty years, we shall perceive that, in so short a period, there are regularly added to the intelligent creation, not fewer than eight hundred millions of beings. This, it is evident, could not occur, were not the removal of one race to make room for the introduction of another.—In the next place, a powerful check is imposed by death on the immorality of mankind.

It is impossible to ascertain the extent to which human wickedness might proceed, were it not for the certain prospect of dissolution. Earthly possessions would assume a higher value, and in consequence, present stronger temptations to avarice, injustice, and various corrupt practices. The habits of vice would also be strengthened with the prolongation of life. When this was at the longest, men were the most depraved. Death interposes, and arrests the progress of sin.— Thirdly, a correspondence is thus maintained between character and its appropriate sphere. Brief as human life unquestionably is, it is sufficiently long for the designs of probation; and if, during the whole of this period, the means and offers of religion, together with the discipline of Providence, are utterly unavailing, there would be no reason to anticipate a different result, were life extended a hundred-fold beyond its actual limits. In the case therefore of the wicked, a protracted continuance in the present state would not accomplish the objects which introduction to it was manifestly intended to realize. On the other hand, before death comes to the Christian, he generally finds this world to be an uncongenial abode. His views, habits, and aspirations, would have infinitely more scope and gratification in heaven. The bonds which unite him to earth are become feeble; and a holier and happier region is the sphere for which he is fitted, and for which he sighs.

There are many who cultivate appearances, while they neglect the heart. There are others who cultivate the heart, but somewhat neglect appearances. Both are in the wrong; though the former are incomparably more so. I will endeavour to regard what is internal, so as to secure the approbation of God. I will so far pay attention to what is exterior, as not justly to incur the disapprobation of man.

When piety and genius are removed by death, the value of earth is diminished, and that of heaven increased.

The world appears quite another thing to philosophers than to the vulgar—to the Christian different from what it appears to mankind in general.

Religion does that for us, in reference to worldly things, which science does in reference to the celestial bodies. It teaches us, that many objects which seem the greatest and the brightest, are in reality neither the one nor the other; as the sun and moon, which appear of so much magnitude and splendour, are shown, by astronomy, to be much smaller and less luminous, than probably the minutest of those specks or stars, which just twinkle to the naked eye.

The lark, which mounts so high in singing her hymn of praise, afterwards descends to the lowest

point, and settles on the ground. So the Christian, who rises the most in aspiration towards God and heaven, sinks proportionally in his own esteem, and rests on the plains of humiliation and self-abasement.

Want of recollection is sometimes pleaded as an excuse for using the name of God with irreverence; but the apology contains its own refutation. On such a subject, the very want of recollection argues a state of mind highly culpable.

It is evident that religion is intended to triumph over all opposite principles. There are several vices which appear susceptible of considerable palliation, merely from the strength and importunity of natural feeling. It would not be difficult to assign many plausible excuses for avarice; as, the force of general example, the wrongs and sufferings of poverty, the influence of habit. But though in defence of moral aberrations, something may perhaps be advanced, infinitely more may be adduced in favour of rectitude; and Religion, which is only another name for Reason, exercised on the highest subjects, demands, of course, obedience to the preponderating motives.

The higher the Christian rises in God's esteem, the lower he sinks in his own; and the more
ies he receives, the more sensibly he feels his
iness of the least mercy.

In experimental and practical divinity, the English language is richer than any other, or than all others, in the world.

Most expositions of Scripture have been constructed on a false principle; namely, that the whole of the Bible requires elucidation; whereas the greater part is perfectly simple, and easy of comprehension. The only effect of these attempts to explain what needs no explanation, is, that you get the same sentiment in different words; but generally so impaired by amplification, that it has lost half its majesty and beauty.

It may appear irrational to inculcate the necessity of watchfulness against the temptations of Satan, when no one can precisely distinguish them from the suggestions of the mind. One thing, however, is certain, that all which is evil in thought or feeling, it is our duty to avoid; while the Scriptures intimate, that Satan is continually endeavouring to excite or foster improper thoughts and feelings. Whatever obscurity, therefore, may rest on the subject, this intimation ought to be deemed sufficient by every reasonable mind; for nothing is so irrational, nothing so unphilosophical, as to disbelieve God. Besides, for practical and moral purposes, the degree of information which we possess, is all that is necessary. If a person guard against every thing sinful in his own mind, he will as effectually elude the temptations of

Satan, as if he knew precisely in what instances, extent, or manner, those temptations were present.

National election, or election to external religious privileges, involves the principle of personal election, or of election to salvation. Nor, so far as the principle is concerned, can we consistently reject the doctrine of personal election, unless we are prepared to deny that there is any difference, in point of advantage, in minds, conditions of life, or climates.

If there are no innate ideas or passions, it is not easy to conceive with what propriety sin can be represented as innate ; because, into the very nature of sin, ideas or passions must necessarily enter.

Some of the most powerful causes in operation, are not subjected to the notice of the senses. Mind in general, which produces all the diversities of human action, and the wind, though occasioning so great a multiplicity of changes in nature, are themselves invisible. In like manner the Deity, who created and who sustains the beautiful fabric of the universe, remains unseen amidst all the wonderful effects which he produces ; and is to be discerned, not by the eye of the body, but by that of the soul.

There is no worthy object in intellectual pursuits, of whatever description, which have not direct or ultimate reference to religion.

We are yet destitute of a philosophical system of divinity, though we possess abundant materials for the purpose. Theology should be treated as any other science; not topics introduced which involve no difficulty, but those points thoroughly investigated which constitute the leading principles.

I can discover nothing irrational in the supposition, that various things in the structure of the human frame, or in the state of external nature, were originally so formed as to come into operation, under certain circumstances, as occasions of suffering, or as consequences of the fall. The hypothesis is not liable to the objection which might properly be urged against an arrangement of a train of means, for assured punishment in particular instances among men, prior to the commission of any offence, and when the commission itself was doubtful. The reason is, because the fall of man was a matter of certainty to the divine prescience. The Deity, therefore, cannot be considered as at all infringing his benevolence or equity, by at first sowing in man and in nature the seeds or elements of suffering, since they were not to develop themselves till after the period of his transgression.

There is little sanction for levity. The sun, moon, and stars, are solemn; the ocean, and all

inanimate nature, are solemn; the Son of God himself was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

The trains of thought in the mind are in no case arbitrary, but always regulated by fixed laws; and any variation that occurs, is owing to variation of circumstances. Thus, if we knew the exact qualities of the mind at any given period; the state of the body, so far as it would influence the mind; together with external scenes or circumstances; we should be able to determine what thoughts would next arise in the mind. Now all these particulars, thus separately enumerated, God no doubt perceives at a single glance; or rather, he foresees them from eternity. We may therefore conceive how the will can be free, yet the thoughts and feelings of the mind be known, or foreknown, to God. If freedom of the will does not imply that the successions of thought are arbitrary, it can never be irreconcilable with the divine prescience. Or the argument may be resolved into a question; Would man be free, supposing, for a moment, that God did not exist? If so, God's existence or foreknowledge cannot affect man's free agency or responsibility; the Divine Being only perceiving before-hand the successive thoughts and emotions of the mind, just as he perceives all the properties of matter, and the changes which it will at any time undergo.

The supposition that mankind acquire depravity from example, education, or circumstances, not from what is termed original sin, only removes the difficulty a single step, if we admit, what indeed cannot be controverted, that they are actually depraved. The same objection might be urged against their being brought into circumstances which invariably occasion depravity, as against their inheriting a corrupt nature from Adam. The whole difficulty, in fact, lies in the permission of moral evil, or its introduction into the world; a problem which any one is at liberty to solve, who feels himself competent.—It may however be submitted, whether any thing is gained by the sentiment, that human depravity is not owing to example or to circumstances. If it is conceded that men do in reality become depraved; if, though their depravity is ascribed to education, or the circumstances of life, those circumstances are acknowledged to be the effect of Adam's fall; what doctrine of Scripture, or what decision of reason, is infringed by the hypothesis?

It is sometimes alleged, that as God is benevolent, and cannot be injured by sin, it will not be visited with punishment. But the argument is most futile. In the first place, it does not follow, because God himself is uninjured by sin, that it will pass with impunity. It may be inju-

rious to the creatures of God; and who shall affirm, that having made the universe, and expended upon it so much wisdom and goodness, he is indifferent to its regulation and welfare?—In the next place, why does the Almighty command and reward obedience? By that he cannot be benefited, any more than by sin he can be injured. Yet no one denies that virtue will be rewarded.—Again, if sin is deserving of punishment, and God is a being of justice, it is perfectly evident that sin will be punished; for it is the province of justice to treat according to desert. The objection, in fact, besides overlooking all the palpable instances in which God has actually punished sin, and involving a total rejection of the authority of Revelation, is chargeable with the grossest absurdities and contradictions. It implies that God does not, or should not, interfere, in cases where his own interests are not concerned; in other words, that he never has done, and never can do, any thing whatever; for by no circumstance can his own interests be affected, or his happiness impaired. It assumes that he is indifferent to right and wrong; otherwise it is difficult to imagine, that while he is able to carry into effect his sentiments of approbation or disapprobation, he should omit to do so, or should do so in one case, and not in another. It supposes he is not the Governor of the world, or else a wicked or an immoral Governor; that sin is not evil, or that God is not just; that he is without

a determinate character, without authority, or without care for his creatures; in short, that he is not God.

The idea of the process or means by which the millennium will probably be accomplished, may be expressed briefly as follows. So far as exterior progression is concerned, the ordinary course of improvement may in general be sufficient. Thus, the older the world grows, the principles of national and civil polity will be more fully developed, and more clearly discerned. The natural consequence will be, the adoption of the wisest and most beneficial forms of government and administration.—Discoveries in science and art will facilitate the diffusion of whatever is valuable, throughout different countries.—It is ascertained that the cultivation of the soil essentially promotes the melioration of climate.—To the advancement of medical knowledge and skill, scarcely any boundaries can be assigned; so that in time, perhaps, disease may be almost unknown. Combine these and similar advantages with a more copious and extensive effusion of spiritual influence, and such a millennium will be realized as reason approves, and Revelation does not seem to discountenance.

It would be desirable to know what species of evidence the advocates of infidelity would require to accompany a Revelation from God; for it is

impossible to specify any kind which would be altogether free from objection.

The assertion that human nature is totally corrupt, requires some qualification or explanation. If nothing more is meant, than that man is so depraved, that he will never of himself repent, believe, entertain genuine love to God, or from right motives practise his commands, the sentiment is correct. But if it expresses, that no kind or portion of moral excellence resides naturally in man, it is unsupported by Scripture, and decisively contradicted by fact. Are not benevolence, filial and parental affection, pity, gratitude, generosity of disposition, the love of justice, in themselves morally good, and parts of the nature which God has communicated to mankind? Or are they peculiar to the renovated and religious character?—Though man's nature is in ruins, it exhibits many traces and fragments of its original beauty and magnificence. Nor does it follow, because the principles and feelings just specified are originally implanted in man, and exist independently of his own cultivation, that they are not intrinsically good. For though they contain nothing at all meritorious, and though God has not annexed to them, but to faith in Christ, a promise of salvation, yet their very nature demonstrates their excellence.—Perhaps it may be that similar qualities are observable in the brute creation; but the fact would only serve

to establish the probability, that brutes are endowed with an intellectual principle, and in some instances appear to display a sort of moral sense ; a supposition which it may be much easier to ridicule, than to confute.

In the earlier stages of Christian experience, the mind is perhaps more influenced by religious principles, as embodied in particular individuals, than by those principles in the abstract. Afterwards, when the views and character are more ripened, principles themselves assume a greater weight, and individuals are less regarded.

Though no motives deducible from human merit can be supposed to influence God in election, it does not follow that he is not governed by reasons in the choice of some, rather, than of others. Doubtless the divine wisdom, as well as sovereignty, regulates the selection ; agreeably to the language of the Apostle, who, after mentioning the predestination of believers, refers it to “the *counsel* of God’s will.”

The interests of religion are little subserved by nice speculations about the precise order or elements of the mental emotions, at the commencement, or during the subsequent stages, of piety.

It is remarkable, that while no book in the world contains so striking an exposure of men

vices and follies as the Bible, no book ever speaks of them with less bitterness or contempt.

Whatever effects the Christian's endeavours to do good may have on others, he is warranted to indulge the hope, that they will not be without a beneficial influence on himself. If he cannot lead so many of his fellow-creatures to heaven as he would, let him rejoice if his own mind is in a state of discipline and preparation for that delightful abode.

Apart from the testimony of Revelation, it is by no means unphilosophical to suppose, that men sufficiently perspicacious on general subjects, may be blind to spiritual things, and therefore unable to estimate their legitimate effect on minds differently constituted or moulded. Who would affirm that persons destitute of a taste for poetry or music, are competent to form accurate opinions on those subjects? In the case of poetry or music, however, the imperfection is natural or intellectual; but in the case of religious truth or experience, it is moral and culpable.

It is a striking circumstance, when the passions which have been the occasions of sin, are rendered the instruments of its punishment.

People will often pay to custom or superstition, at they will not pay to duty or to God.

The conceptions of the imagination are said to be the most vivid and luminous, when the eye is closed to the sight of sensible objects; that is, internal vision is most powerful in the absence of that which is external. In like manner, the eye of the soul must be closed to earthly scenes and attractions, if exalted or impressive views are to be obtained of invisible and heavenly realities.

The death of the inferior animals is a difficulty not chargeable on Revelation, but equally mysterious on any other system or hypothesis. That it is an effect of the fall, we have perhaps no sufficient authority to suppose. In itself, it comprehends nothing inequitable; since life, in all its varieties, is a gratuitous donation, and in most instances, no doubt, comprises more enjoyment than suffering. The arrangement might have been originally established in anticipation of the altered circumstances of man; but was perhaps inseparable from the economy and destination of our world.

Have we evidence for the opinion, that the state of external nature before the fall, was considerably more benignant and beautiful than during the period which elapsed between that event and the deluge? or in general during the ages which have *passed since the occurrence of that catastrophe?*

An admirable code of maxims for the conduct of life, might be extracted from the writings of the ancient moralists and sages, who, in this respect, are perhaps too much depreciated. Their grand deficiency consisted in the want of adequate motives, which are supplied only by the great doctrines of redemption, the immortality of the soul, and an equitable distribution of future rewards and punishments.

It appears to be a favourite practice with sceptics, to indulge in disparaging and contemptuous representations of man. But the practical inference from this lowly estimate of humanity, they seem to have utterly neglected ; namely, the propriety of so vain and ignorant a being exercising some portion of hesitation and diffidence, in pronouncing on the claims or the doctrines of Revelation.

If there is no propagation of mind, how can there be of depravity ?

At first view the opinion may seem very plausible, that the matter of the world is eternal, according to the ancient adage, ' Out of nothing, nothing can be produced.' Yet on narrower inspection, scarcely any opinion appears more absurd ; as it takes for granted the very position which requires to be established, and which is deviously confuted by the admission of the divine omnipotence.

It is quite superfluous to declaim against excess of religious feeling, as the prevailing tendency among mankind is to think and feel too little on the subject.

The existence of moral and physical evil is a problem at least equally inexplicable on the infidel scheme, as on that of Revelation.

In general, those ministers seem the most useful, who possess most of the spirit of love, and who bring religious truth to bear on the affections and consciences, rather than on the reasoning faculties or the fears of their auditors.

If the Almighty is slow in the operations of nature and of grace, it is to be expected that he may often be gradual in the accomplishment of his Providential purposes. Delay therefore in the attainment of any particular end, is no argument of his opposition to its attainment.

One cause of scepticism appears to be, undue restriction of thought on religious subjects in early life. The consequence often is, that when riper years claim greater latitude and independence of reflection, the mind having never been habituated to think for itself, rushes into extravagance of sentiment. The notions which it has previously held are easily cast off, because *they have been imposed rather than adopted.*

because neither conviction, nor regard to consistency, is interested in their retention.

Mistaken views of the divine character, lie at the foundation of all error in religion.

Instead of questioning whether the world contains any atheists, perhaps it would be nearer the truth to suppose, that the generality of men are of that description. At least it seems certain, that they do not believe in the existence of such a God as the Scriptures reveal. The Apostle reminded the Christians at Ephesus, that they were formerly 'without God;' in the original, *ἄθεοι*, *atheists*. These persons had not been without the acknowledgment of a divinity, for they were formerly notorious for the practice of idolatry; but they had possessed no accurate views of the nature or attributes of the true divinity. If therefore idolaters may be regarded as atheists, the appellation may justly be applied to all who have no correct or religious sentiments respecting the divine character; and, in this sense, may be extended to the great majority of mankind. The image indeed which most persons form of the Supreme Being, resembles the figure that Nebuchadnezzar beheld in his dream; of which, though a certain portion consisted of gold, the greater part was composed of inferior and debasing ingredients. Some conceptions entertained respecting the Deity, may accord with the standard of

Scripture and truth ; but those conceptions are commonly alloyed by others, which are the offspring only of imagination or desire. In strict language, therefore, none but real Christians can be considered as exempt from the imputation of atheism.

It is most unphilosophical to question the possibility, or in particular circumstances, the probability of miracles, which are nothing more than variations from the customary order of events. Now the general course of things is not the result of any natural necessity, but solely of divine appointment ; in other words, it is only God's uniformity of operation, from which, undoubtedly, he can deviate whenever he pleases : and surely no one would affect to maintain, that an occasion can never arise on which such deviation may be desirable.

The depravity of man is shown, not only by the depth to which he is fallen from God, but by his endeavours to bring down the divine character and government to the level of his own degradation.

Two circumstances appear remarkable : first, that persons without religion are sometimes more amiable and agreeable than others who are its subjects ; secondly, that the pious have in certain instances less enjoyment, all sources included,

than some who are profane. But in neither case is Christianity to be blamed, for in the former, a deficiency of religion is the principal cause; in the latter, physical constitution, or that circumstance combined with defective piety.

In subjects of grace, we may discover the same principles that govern the irreligious; the same regard to the present, and forgetfulness of the future; the same tendency to prefer the body to the mind; the same remissness in the performance of sacred exercises, and in the prosecution of active duty. The main difference is in the degree.

He who professes to take part with religion, yet throws disparagement on its more pure and decided manifestations, is a greater enemy to its interests, than he who is totally indifferent about the matter, or who makes no scruple to avow his scepticism or hostility.

To reconcile the mind to the thoughts of death, philosophy can tell us, that it will afford exemption from sickness and pain; extinguish envy; diminish or destroy hatred; and deliver from the vicissitudes and uncertainty attending our mortal condition:—but what can all this avail the cold clay, or the disembodied spirit?

Religion gains little by that uncharitable spirit which sometimes lurks beneath her garb, and

which views with unbending rigour every trivial impropriety, every approach to cheerful levity, and every deviation from established opinion.

The worldling places the highest value on the objects beneath him ; namely, the things of earth : the Christian, on the objects infinitely above him ; namely, God, and heavenly realities.

In the whole compass of experimental Christianity, nothing is so interesting as the phenomenon of conversion. On this topic, the maturest believer will never be weary of expatiating ; for the same principles and affections are here brought into operation, which are experienced in the subsequent parts of the spiritual life : only in the former instance, they are presented in a much more vivid and impressive manner.

Religion is only a question of fact ; and so are all the doctrines which it inculcates.

It is not when the sun shines brightest, that human vision is the most distinct, or that it reaches to the greatest distance ; but rather in seasons when the light is softened or partially obstructed by clouds ; as in each of these cases appears especially on surveying the broad expanse of ocean. In like manner, it is not amidst the sunshine of prosperity, that the intellectual or spiritual vision of man is the most piercing or

extensive ; for though the nearer objects or scenes may appear luminous or beautiful, those which are remote are neglected, or obscurely discerned.

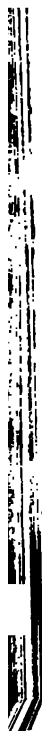
It is only the Christian whose character seems to make progress with his years. Of most other persons, the excellences appear chiefly in the early periods of life, before commerce with the world.

There is a tendency in those Christians, especially, whose minds are original or discursive, to slight the elementary doctrines of religion ; which, however familiar they may be, must ever form the principal basis of hope, pleasure, and the whole circle of moral virtues.

The Christian is never remote from heaven. Nothing intervenes between him and the consummation of his desires, but the thin veil of mortality.

FINIS.





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